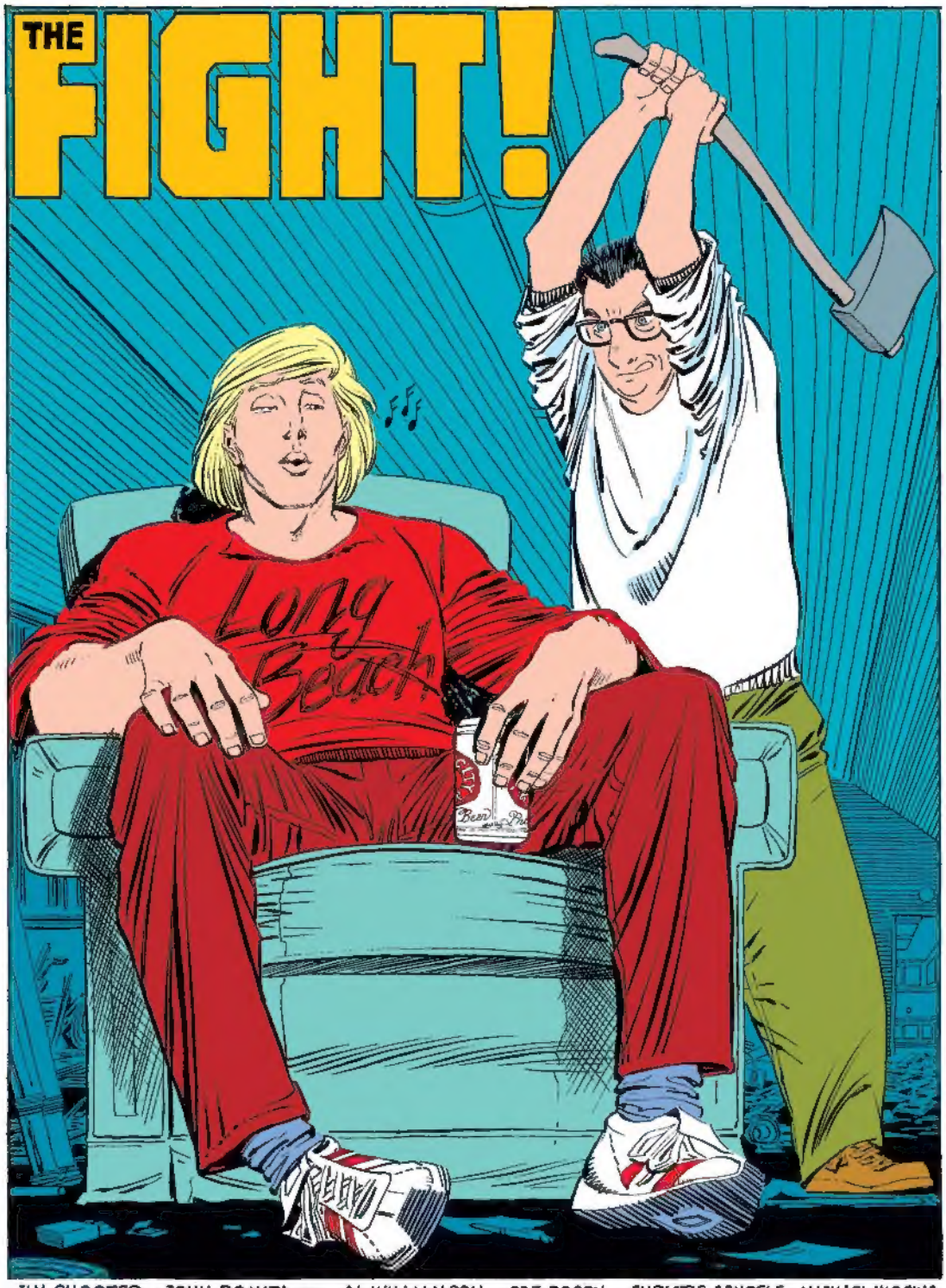
MARVEL®
© 1986 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
TM
75¢ US
95¢ CAN
4 JAN
02140
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
new universe™
STAR BRAND™



JIM SHOOTER
SCRIPT

JOHN ROMITA, JR.
PENCILS

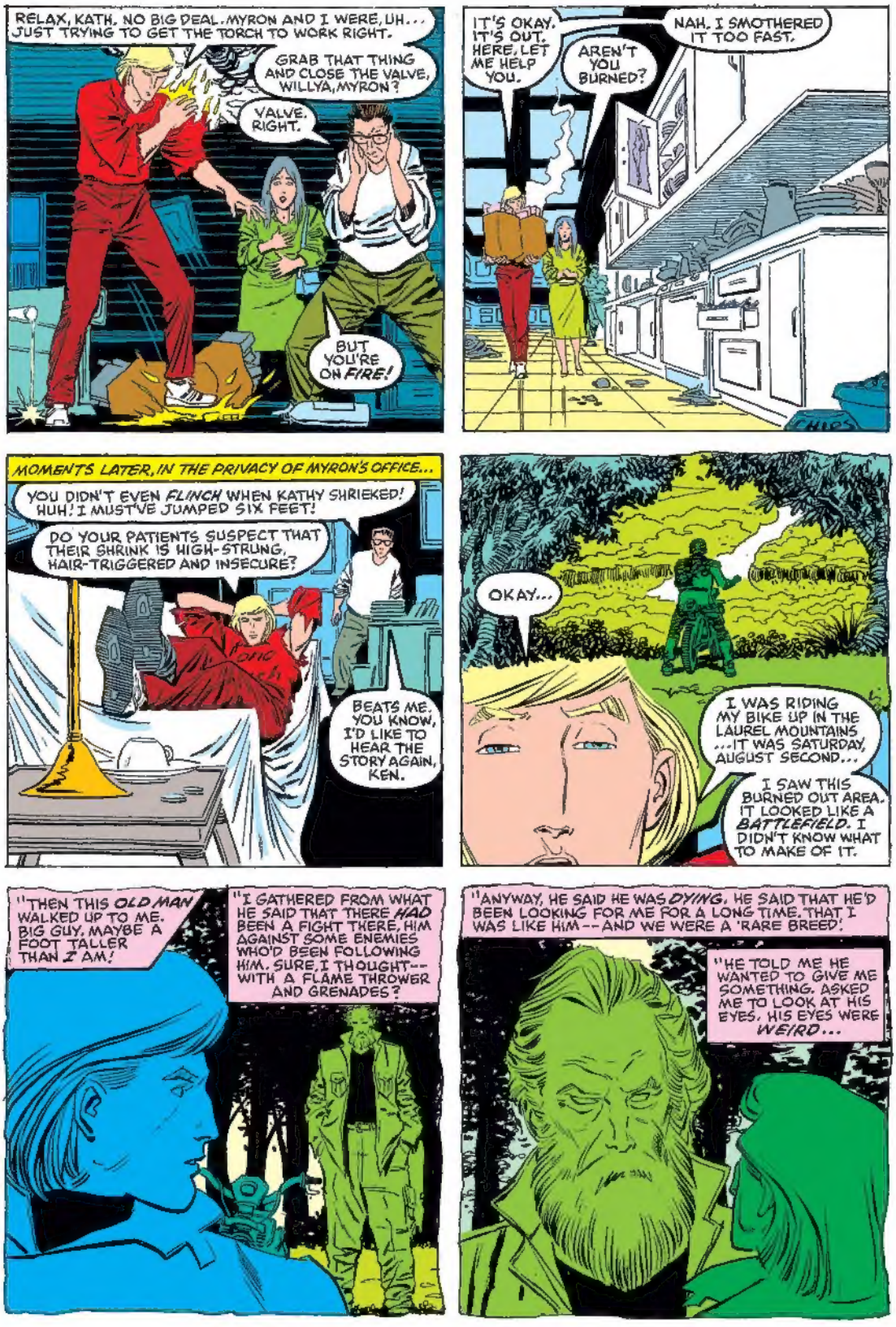
AL WILLIAMSON
INKS

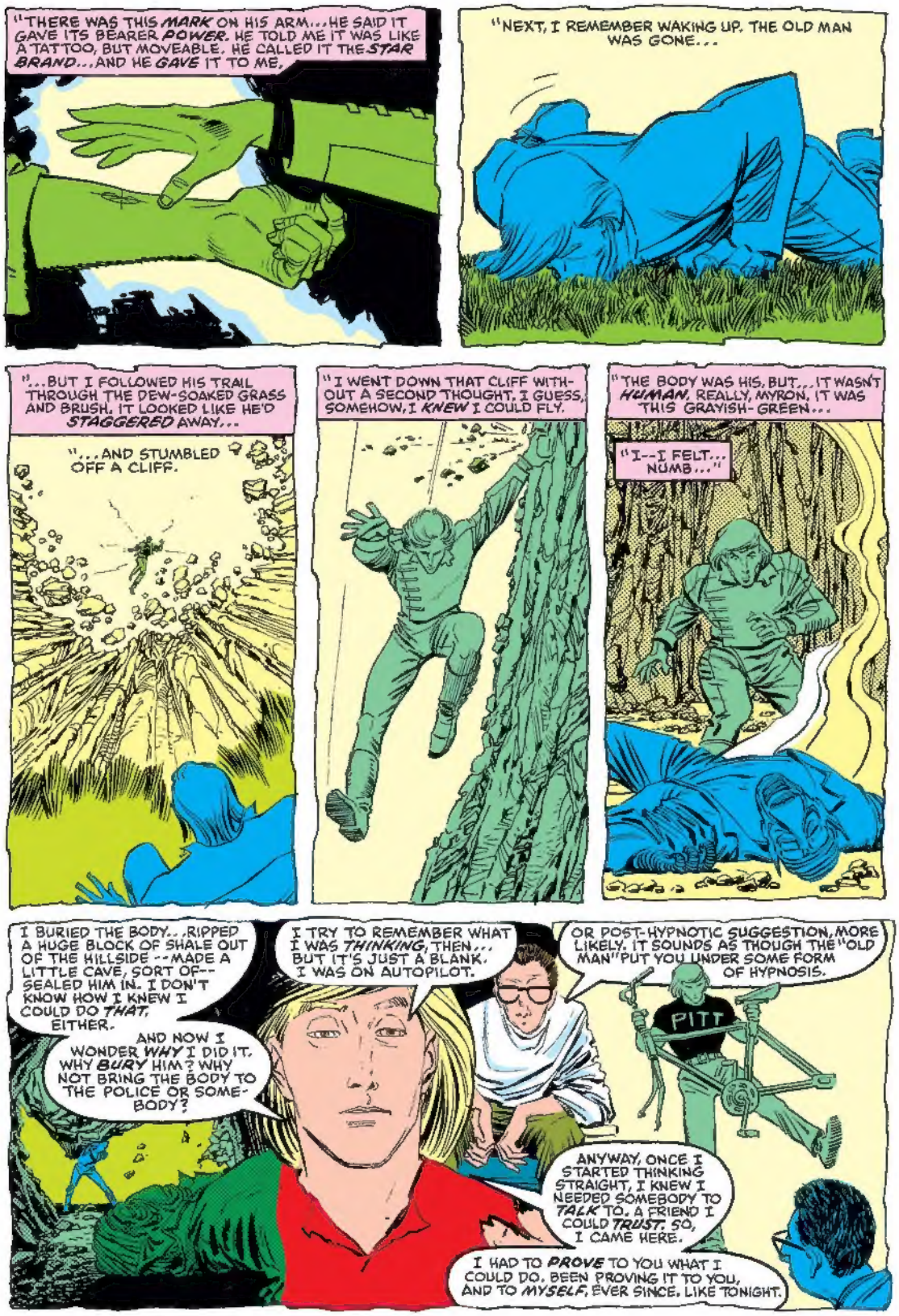
JOE ROSEN
LETTERS

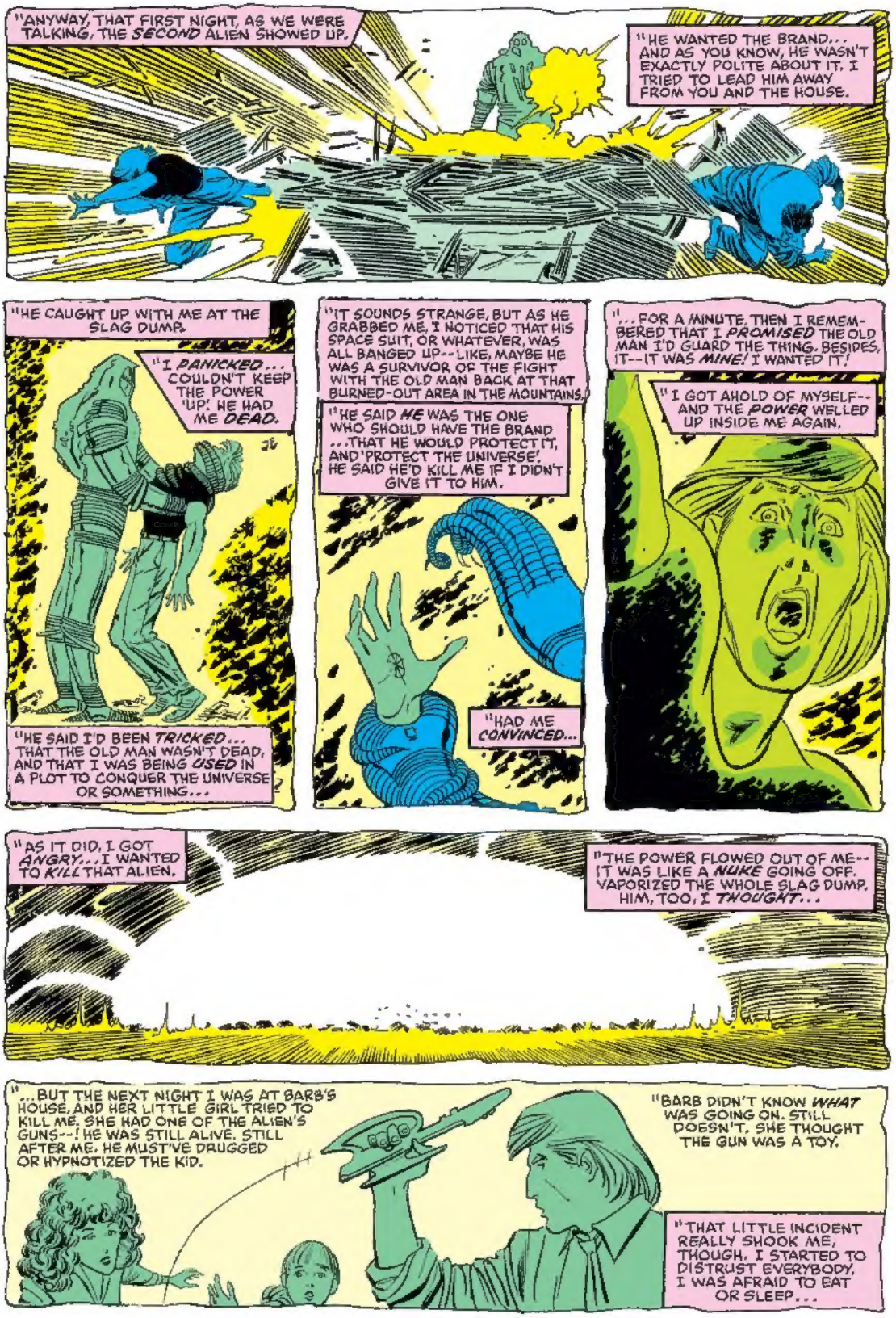
CHRISTIE SCHEELE
COLORS

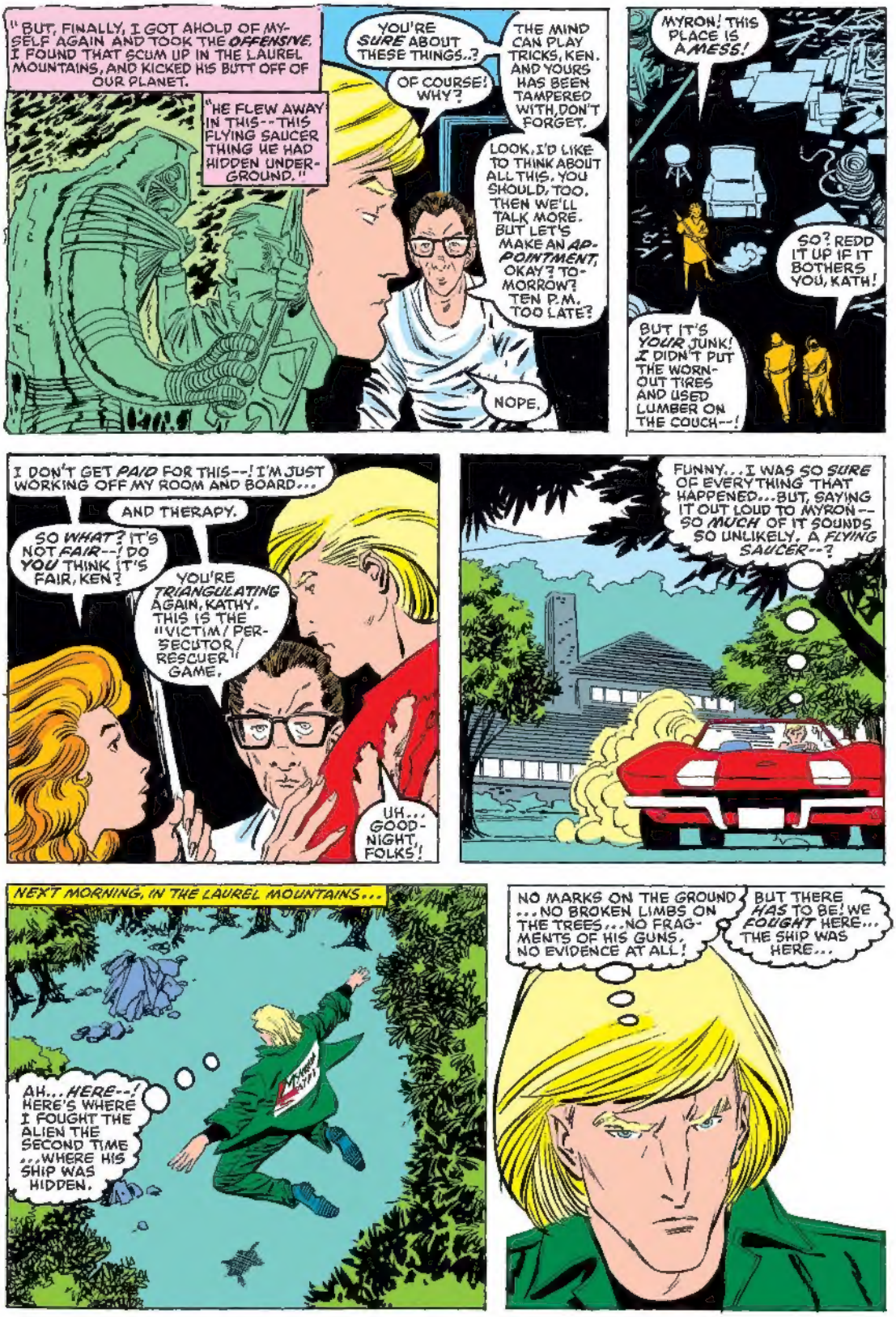
MICHAEL HIGGINS
EDITING

UNNNN!
A DOLLAR FIFTY AT THE FLEA MARKET, AND LOOK AT IT NOW! RUINED!
YOU OWE ME AN AXE, KEN!
MYRON, I *TOLD* YOU --A WHILE BACK, A *NUKE* WENT OFF IN MY HANDS AND DIDN'T HURT ME. DON'T YOU BELIEVE ME?
THIS WHOLE THING IS *SO* IMPOSSIBLE THAT EVEN *SEEING* ISN'T BELIEVING.
HM. THANKS FOR REMINDING ME THAT I NEED A HAIRCUT.
THIS DOESN'T HURT, EITHER? CAN YOU *FEEL* IT?
I CAN FEEL THAT IT'S HOT... BUT IT DOESN'T HURT. *NOTHING* CAN HURT ME--
--UNLESS I LOSE MY CONCENTRATION...
OH, MY GOD--!
HUH? KATHY--!
OH--!


RELAX, KATH. NO BIG DEAL. MYRON AND I WERE, UH... JUST TRYING TO GET THE TORCH TO WORK RIGHT.
GRAB THAT THING AND CLOSE THE VALVE, WILLYA, MYRON?
VALVE. RIGHT.
BUT YOU'RE ON *FIRE!*
IT'S OKAY. IT'S OUT. HERE, LET ME HELP YOU.
AREN'T YOU BURNED?
NAH. I SMOTHERED IT TOO FAST.
MOMENTS LATER, IN THE PRIVACY OF MYRON'S OFFICE...
YOU DIDN'T EVEN *FLINCH* WHEN KATHY SHRIEKED! HUH! I MUST'VE JUMPED SIX FEET!
DO YOUR PATIENTS SUSPECT THAT THEIR SHRINK IS HIGH-STRUNG, HAIR-TRIGGERED AND INSECURE?
BEATS ME. YOU KNOW, I'D LIKE TO HEAR THE STORY AGAIN, KEN.
OKAY...
I WAS RIDING MY BIKE UP IN THE LAUREL MOUNTAINS ...IT WAS SATURDAY, AUGUST SECOND...
I SAW THIS BURNED OUT AREA. IT LOOKED LIKE A *BATTLEFIELD.* I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT.
"THEN THIS *OLD MAN* WALKED UP TO ME. BIG GUY, MAYBE A FOOT TALLER THAN *I* AM!
"I GATHERED FROM WHAT HE SAID THAT THERE *HAD* BEEN A FIGHT THERE, HIM AGAINST SOME ENEMIES WHO'D BEEN FOLLOWING HIM. SURE, I THOUGHT-- WITH A FLAME THROWER AND GRENADES?
"ANYWAY, HE SAID HE WAS *DYING*, HE SAID THAT HE'D BEEN LOOKING FOR ME FOR A LONG TIME. THAT I WAS LIKE HIM--AND WE WERE A 'RARE BREED'.
"HE TOLD ME HE WANTED TO GIVE ME SOMETHING. ASKED ME TO LOOK AT HIS EYES. HIS EYES WERE *WEIRD...*

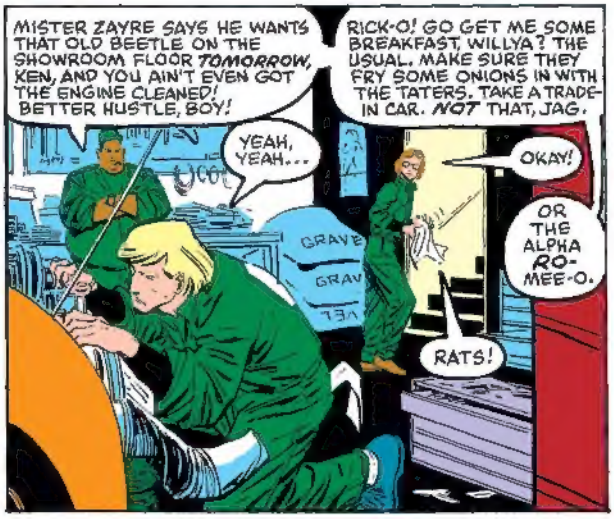

"THERE WAS THIS MARK ON HIS ARM...HE SAID IT GAVE ITS BEARER POWER. HE TOLD ME IT WAS LIKE A TATTOO, BUT MOVEABLE. HE CALLED IT THE STAR BRAND...AND HE GAVE IT TO ME.
"NEXT, I REMEMBER WAKING UP. THE OLD MAN WAS GONE...
"...BUT I FOLLOWED HIS TRAIL THROUGH THE DEW-SOAKED GRASS AND BRUSH. IT LOOKED LIKE HE'D STAGGERED AWAY...
"...AND STUMBLED OFF A CLIFF.
"I WENT DOWN THAT CLIFF WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT. I GUESS, SOMEHOW, I KNEW I COULD FLY.
"THE BODY WAS HIS, BUT...IT WASN'T HUMAN, REALLY, MYRON. IT WAS THIS GRAYISH-GREEN...
"I--I FELT... NUMB..."
I BURIED THE BODY...RIPPED A HUGE BLOCK OF SHALE OUT OF THE HILLSIDE --MADE A LITTLE CAVE, SORT OF--SEALED HIM IN. I DON'T KNOW HOW I KNEW I COULD DO THAT, EITHER.
AND NOW I WONDER WHY I DID IT. WHY BURY HIM? WHY NOT BRING THE BODY TO THE POLICE OR SOMEBODY?
I TRY TO REMEMBER WHAT I WAS THINKING, THEN... BUT IT'S JUST A BLANK. I WAS ON AUTOPILOT.
OR POST-HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION, MORE LIKELY. IT SOUNDS AS THOUGH THE "OLD MAN" PUT YOU UNDER SOME FORM OF HYPNOSIS.
PITT
ANYWAY, ONCE I STARTED THINKING STRAIGHT, I KNEW I NEEDED SOMEBODY TO TALK TO. A FRIEND I COULD TRUST. SO, I CAME HERE.
I HAD TO PROVE TO YOU WHAT I COULD DO. BEEN PROVING IT TO YOU, AND TO MYSELF, EVER SINCE. LIKE TONIGHT.


"ANYWAY, THAT FIRST NIGHT, AS WE WERE TALKING, THE SECOND ALIEN SHOWED UP.
"HE WANTED THE BRAND... AND AS YOU KNOW, HE WASN'T EXACTLY POLITE ABOUT IT. I TRIED TO LEAD HIM AWAY FROM YOU AND THE HOUSE.
"HE CAUGHT UP WITH ME AT THE SLAG DUMP.
"I PANICKED... COULDN'T KEEP THE POWER 'UP.' HE HAD ME DEAD.
"HE SAID I'D BEEN TRICKED... THAT THE OLD MAN WASN'T DEAD, AND THAT I WAS BEING USED IN A PLOT TO CONQUER THE UNIVERSE OR SOMETHING...
"IT SOUNDS STRANGE, BUT AS HE GRABBED ME, I NOTICED THAT HIS SPACE SUIT, OR WHATEVER, WAS ALL BANGED UP--LIKE, MAYBE HE WAS A SURVIVOR OF THE FIGHT WITH THE OLD MAN BACK AT THAT BURNED-OUT AREA IN THE MOUNTAINS.
"HE SAID HE WAS THE ONE WHO SHOULD HAVE THE BRAND ...THAT HE WOULD PROTECT IT, AND 'PROTECT THE UNIVERSE.' HE SAID HE'D KILL ME IF I DIDN'T GIVE IT TO HIM.
"HAD ME CONVINCED...
"...FOR A MINUTE, THEN I REMEMBERED THAT I PROMISED THE OLD MAN I'D GUARD THE THING. BESIDES, IT--IT WAS MINE! I WANTED IT!
"I GOT AHOLD OF MYSELF-- AND THE POWER WELLED UP INSIDE ME AGAIN.
"AS IT DID, I GOT ANGRY... I WANTED TO KILL THAT ALIEN.
"THE POWER FLOWED OUT OF ME-- IT WAS LIKE A NUKE GOING OFF. VAPORIZED THE WHOLE SLAG DUMP, HIM, TOO, I THOUGHT...
"...BUT THE NEXT NIGHT I WAS AT BARB'S HOUSE, AND HER LITTLE GIRL TRIED TO KILL ME. SHE HAD ONE OF THE ALIEN'S GUNS--! HE WAS STILL ALIVE. STILL AFTER ME. HE MUST'VE DRUGGED OR HYPNOTIZED THE KID.
"BARB DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. STILL DOESN'T. SHE THOUGHT THE GUN WAS A TOY.
"THAT LITTLE INCIDENT REALLY SHOOK ME, THOUGH. I STARTED TO DISTRUST EVERYBODY. I WAS AFRAID TO EAT OR SLEEP...


"BUT, FINALLY, I GOT AHOLD OF MYSELF AGAIN AND TOOK THE OFFENSIVE. I FOUND THAT SCUM UP IN THE LAUREL MOUNTAINS, AND KICKED HIS BUTT OFF OF OUR PLANET.
"HE FLEW AWAY IN THIS--THIS FLYING SAUCER THING HE HAD HIDDEN UNDERGROUND."
YOU'RE SURE ABOUT THESE THINGS..?
OF COURSE! WHY?
THE MIND CAN PLAY TRICKS, KEN. AND YOURS HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH, DON'T FORGET.
LOOK, I'D LIKE TO THINK ABOUT ALL THIS, YOU SHOULD, TOO. THEN WE'LL TALK MORE. BUT LET'S MAKE AN APPOINTMENT, OKAY? TOMORROW? TEN P.M. TOO LATE?
NOPE.
MYRON! THIS PLACE IS A MESS!
SO? REDD IT UP IF IT BOTHERS YOU, KATH!
BUT IT'S YOUR JUNK! I DIDN'T PUT THE WORN-OUT TIRES AND USED LUMBER ON THE COUCH--!
I DON'T GET PAID FOR THIS--! I'M JUST WORKING OFF MY ROOM AND BOARD...
AND THERAPY.
SO WHAT? IT'S NOT FAIR--! DO YOU THINK IT'S FAIR, KEN?
YOU'RE TRIANGULATING AGAIN, KATHY. THIS IS THE "VICTIM/PERSECUTOR/RESCUER" GAME.
UH... GOOD-NIGHT, FOLKS!
FUNNY... I WAS SO SURE OF EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED... BUT, SAYING IT OUT LOUD TO MYRON--SO MUCH OF IT SOUNDS SO UNLIKELY. A FLYING SAUCER--?
NEXT MORNING, IN THE LAUREL MOUNTAINS...
AH... HERE--! HERE'S WHERE I FOUGHT THE ALIEN THE SECOND TIME ...WHERE HIS SHIP WAS HIDDEN.
NO MARKS ON THE GROUND ...NO BROKEN LIMBS ON THE TREES...NO FRAGMENTS OF HIS GUNS, NO EVIDENCE AT ALL!
BUT THERE HAS TO BE! WE FOUGHT HERE... THE SHIP WAS HERE...

SHORTLY...
I DON'T GET IT! DID I IMAGINE IT ALL?
NO. I JUST FLEW TO THE LAUREL MOUNTAINS AND BACK. THAT WAS REAL.
AND I'M REALLY LATE.
M'MUL ZAYR
AUTO RECOND
ZAYRE
IRE STORATION

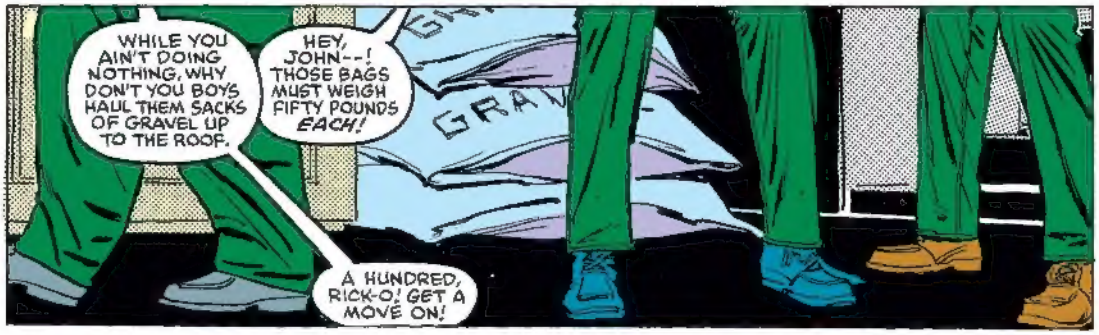
HMPH. GOOD EVENING, MR. CONNELL.
'MORNING, JOHN. HEY, RICK-O. HIYA, JOAN.
'LO, KENNY!
HO!

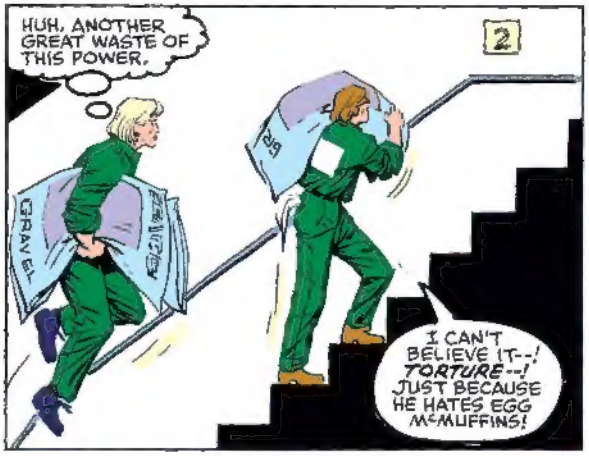

MISTER ZAYRE SAYS HE WANTS THAT OLD BEETLE ON THE SHOWROOM FLOOR TOMORROW, KEN, AND YOU AIN'T EVEN GOT THE ENGINE CLEANED! BETTER HUSTLE, BOY!
YEAH, YEAH...
RICK-O! GO GET ME SOME BREAKFAST, WILLYA? THE USUAL. MAKE SURE THEY FRY SOME ONIONS IN WITH THE TATERS. TAKE A TRADE-IN CAR. NOT THAT, JAG.
OKAY!
OR THE ALPHA RO-MEE-O.
RATS!

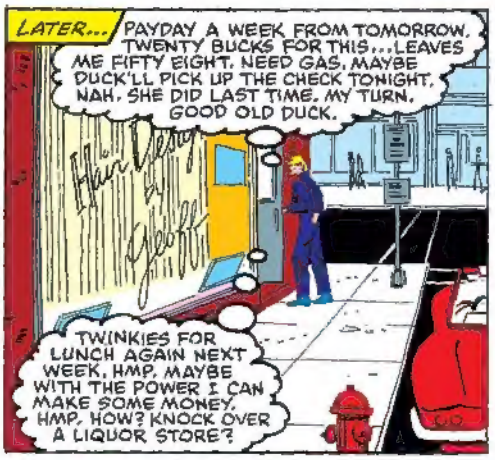
HM. I'LL SAVE AN HOUR OR SO BY STRAIGHTENING THIS BUMPER THE QUICK WAY. BIG JOHN'LL NEVER NOTICE.

PRESENTLY...
YO! GUYS! THE DINER WAS ROBBED! JUST BEFORE I GOT THERE!
THREE GREASERS CLOCKED OLD MAN PAPAMICHAEL ON THE HEAD WITH A TIRE IRON AND GRABBED THE CASH!
WHAT?! HOW BAD'S HE HURT?
DON'T KNOW. BAD.

GOD, I WISH I'D BEEN THERE!
NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE, ANYHOW, KEN!
WHAT'S THIS, DUMMY?
McBREAKFAST!
YOU'RE WRONG, JOHN. I COULD HAVE DONE PLENTY, BUT I WAS BUSY HERE...
...STRAIGHTENING A BUMPER.


WHILE YOU AIN'T DOING NOTHING, WHY DON'T YOU BOYS HAUL THEM SACKS OF GRAVEL UP TO THE ROOF.
HEY, JOHN--! THOSE BAGS MUST WEIGH FIFTY POUNDS EACH!
A HUNDRED, RICK-O! GET A MOVE ON!


2
HUH. ANOTHER GREAT WASTE OF THIS POWER.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT--! TORTURE--! JUST BECAUSE HE HATES EGG McMUFFINS!


LATER...
PAYDAY A WEEK FROM TOMORROW. TWENTY BUCKS FOR THIS...LEAVES ME FIFTY EIGHT. NEED GAS, MAYBE DUCK'LL PICK UP THE CHECK TONIGHT, NAH. SHE DID LAST TIME. MY TURN. GOOD OLD DUCK.
TWINKIES FOR LUNCH AGAIN NEXT WEEK, HMP. MAYBE WITH THE POWER I CAN MAKE SOME MONEY. HMP. HOW? KNOCK OVER A LIQUOR STORE?

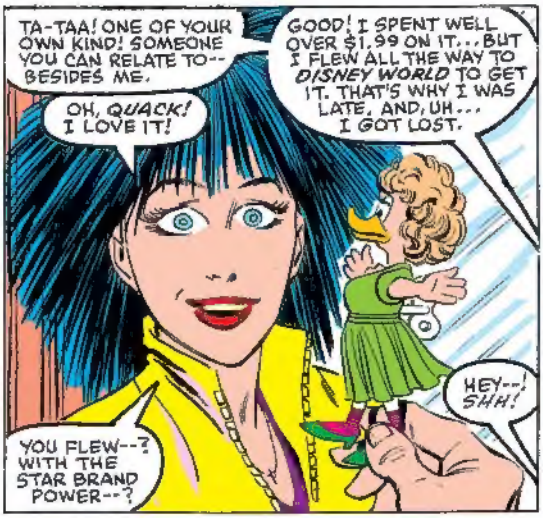
AT LEAST IF I GET HUNGRY I CAN FLY TO THE TROPICS AND SCORE SOME WILD BANANAS.
WHAT IS THIS? WHY WON'T THESE SCISSORS CUT?
HUH? OH.

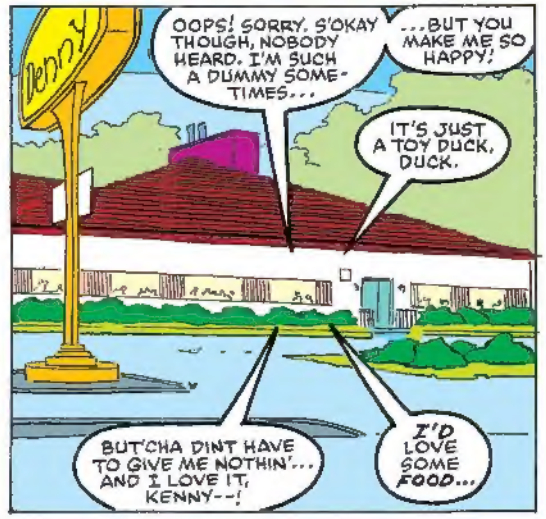
AH. THERE. THEY MUST'VE BEEN STUCK. GUESS THEY NEED TO BE OILED.
HAD THE POWER UP. LOOKS LIKE IT PROTECTS MY HAIR, TOO.
I'VE GOTTEN GOOD AT KEEPING IT TURNED ON. BEEN KEEPING IT UP PRACTICALLY ALL THE TIME. HARDLY HAVE TO TRY ANYMORE.

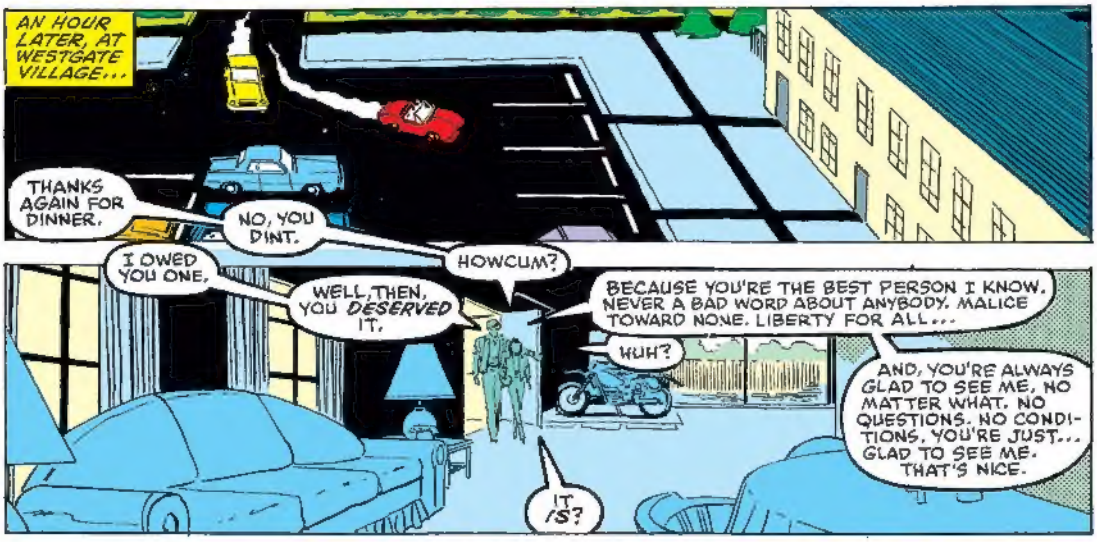
SHORTLY...
LATE AGAIN. OH, WELL. DUCK WON'T MIND SHE NEVER DOES.
Denny's

HIYA, DUCK!
QUACK!
SORRY I'M LATE.
S'OKAY! I DINT MIND. NICE HAIRCUT!
THANKS. BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING.
OH, KENNY--! YOU SHOONT OF!

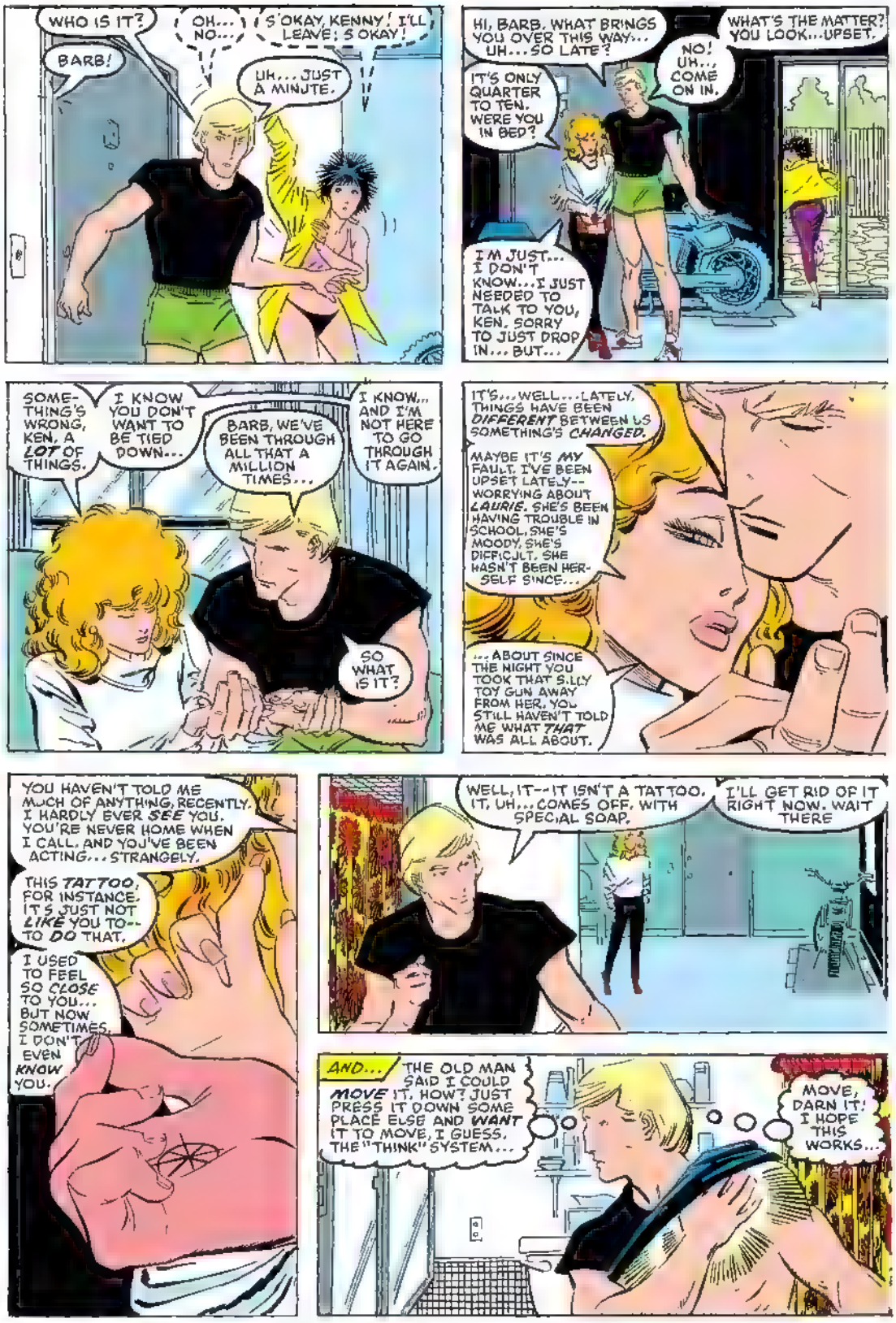
HEY, HEY, IT'S NOTHING. I MEAN *REALLY* NOTHING!
I DON'T CARE! I *LOVE* IT!
WELL, WAIT'LL YOU *SEE* IT...

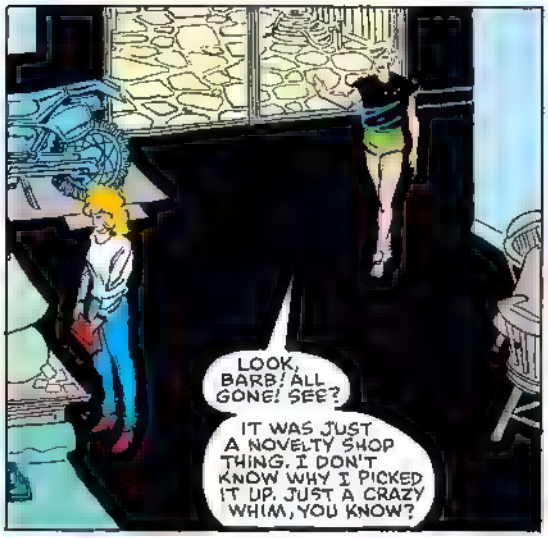

TA-TAA! ONE OF YOUR OWN KIND! SOMEONE YOU CAN RELATE TO-- BESIDES ME.
OH, *QUACK!* I LOVE IT!
GOOD! I SPENT WELL OVER $1.99 ON IT... BUT I FLEW ALL THE WAY TO *DISNEY WORLD* TO GET IT. THAT'S WHY I WAS LATE, AND, UH... I GOT LOST.
YOU FLEW--? WITH THE STAR BRAND POWER--?
HEY--! *SHH!*


Denny
OOPS! SORRY. S'OKAY THOUGH, NOBODY HEARD. I'M SUCH A DUMMY SOMETIMES...
...BUT YOU MAKE ME SO HAPPY!
IT'S JUST A TOY DUCK, DUCK.
BUT'CHA DINT HAVE TO GIVE ME NOTHIN'... AND I LOVE IT, KENNY--!
I'D LOVE SOME *FOOD*...

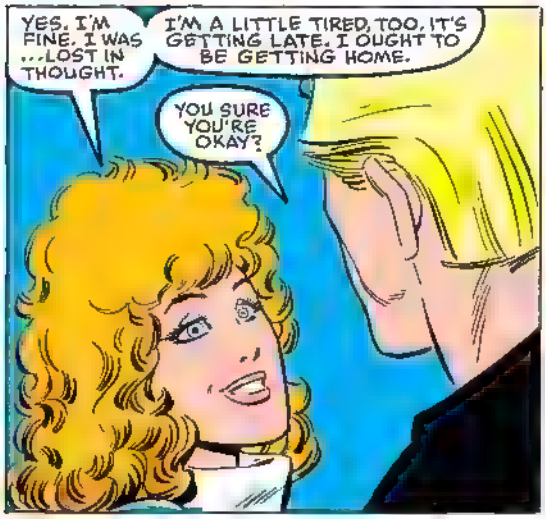

AN HOUR LATER, AT WESTGATE VILLAGE...
THANKS AGAIN FOR DINNER.
NO, YOU DINT.
I OWED YOU ONE.
WELL, THEN, YOU *DESERVED* IT.
HOWCUM?
BECAUSE YOU'RE THE BEST PERSON I KNOW. NEVER A BAD WORD ABOUT ANYBODY. MALICE TOWARD NONE. LIBERTY FOR ALL...
HUH?
AND, YOU'RE ALWAYS GLAD TO SEE ME, NO MATTER WHAT. NO QUESTIONS. NO CONDITIONS. YOU'RE JUST... GLAD TO SEE ME. THAT'S NICE.
IT *IS*?

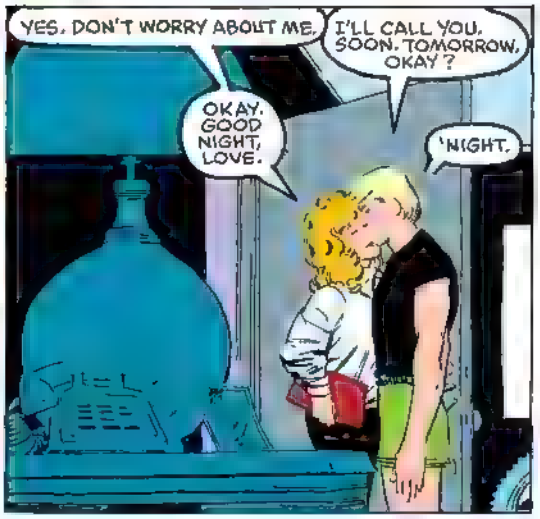
YEAH, SO'S THE BODY!
PUT ME DAHN!
OKAY. DID YOU KNOW YOUR BODY IS LIKE A MAP?
I SEE LONDON, I SEE FRANCE...
A-HA! LICHTENSTEIN!
YEEEEK! THAT TICKLES!
SOME TIME LATER...
...SO YOU WIN THE "BEAK OF THE WEEK AWARD"...
OOOH, THAT WAS "FOWL"!
HEY, I WANNA LEARN TO RIDE THIS! WILL YOU TEACH ME, KENNY?
VROOM! VROOOM!
HEY! WHAT'CHA DOON?!
SAY "BIRD-SEED," DUCK!
AW, KENNY--! I'M TOO FAT...
LOOKS GOOD TO ME.
YOU'RE NEAT. YOU LIKE ME ANYWAY, DON'TCHA? UN-CONDITIONAL... HUH, KENNY?
YEAH.
NOK NOK

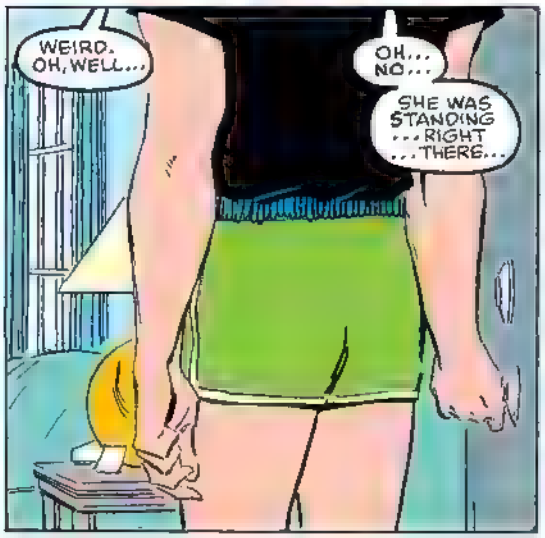

WHO IS IT?
BARB!
OH... NO...
S'OKAY, KENNY! I'LL LEAVE! S'OKAY!
UH... JUST A MINUTE.
HI, BARB. WHAT BRINGS YOU OVER THIS WAY... UH... SO LATE?
IT'S ONLY QUARTER TO TEN. WERE YOU IN BED?
I'M JUST... I DON'T KNOW... I JUST NEEDED TO TALK TO YOU, KEN. SORRY TO JUST DROP IN... BUT...
NO! UH... COME ON IN.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU LOOK... UPSET.
SOMETHING'S WRONG, KEN, A LOT OF THINGS.
I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO BE TIED DOWN...
BARB, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH ALL THAT A MILLION TIMES...
I KNOW... AND I'M NOT HERE TO GO THROUGH IT AGAIN.
SO WHAT IS IT?
IT'S... WELL... LATELY, THINGS HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT BETWEEN US SOMETHING'S CHANGED.
MAYBE IT'S MY FAULT. I'VE BEEN UPSET LATELY-- WORRYING ABOUT LAURIE. SHE'S BEEN HAVING TROUBLE IN SCHOOL, SHE'S MOODY, SHE'S DIFFICULT. SHE HASN'T BEEN HERSELF SINCE...
... ABOUT SINCE THE NIGHT YOU TOOK THAT SILLY TOY GUN AWAY FROM HER. YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHAT THAT WAS ALL ABOUT.
YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME MUCH OF ANYTHING, RECENTLY. I HARDLY EVER SEE YOU. YOU'RE NEVER HOME WHEN I CALL. AND YOU'VE BEEN ACTING... STRANGELY.
THIS TATTOO, FOR INSTANCE. IT'S JUST NOT LIKE YOU TO-- TO DO THAT.
I USED TO FEEL SO CLOSE TO YOU... BUT NOW SOMETIMES, I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU.
WELL, IT-- IT ISN'T A TATTOO, IT, UH... COMES OFF, WITH SPECIAL SOAP.
I'LL GET RID OF IT RIGHT NOW. WAIT THERE
AND... THE OLD MAN SAID I COULD MOVE IT. HOW? JUST PRESS IT DOWN SOME PLACE ELSE AND WANT IT TO MOVE, I GUESS. THE "THINK" SYSTEM...
MOVE, DARN IT! I HOPE THIS WORKS...


LOOK, BARB! ALL GONE! SEE?
IT WAS JUST A NOVELTY SHOP THING. I DON'T KNOW WHY I PICKED IT UP. JUST A CRAZY WHIM, YOU KNOW?

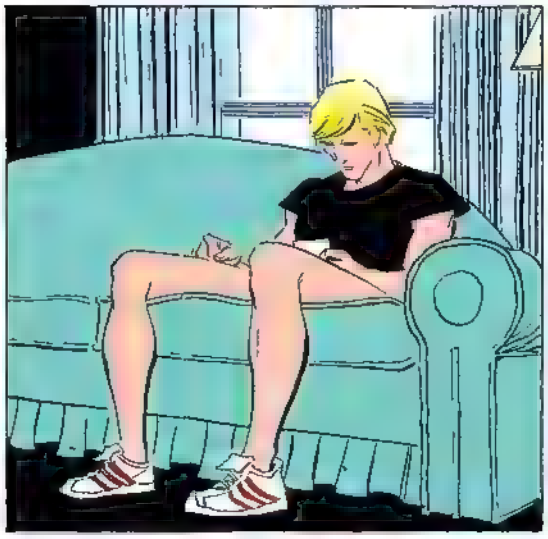
BARB? YOU OKAY?

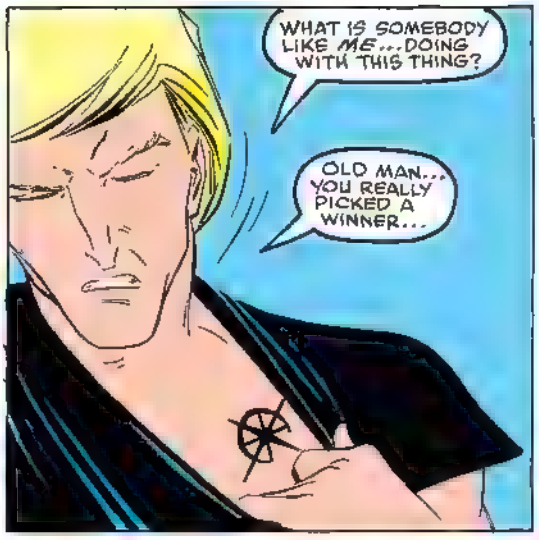

YES. I'M FINE. I WAS ...LOST IN THOUGHT.
I'M A LITTLE TIRED, TOO. IT'S GETTING LATE. I OUGHT TO BE GETTING HOME.
YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?

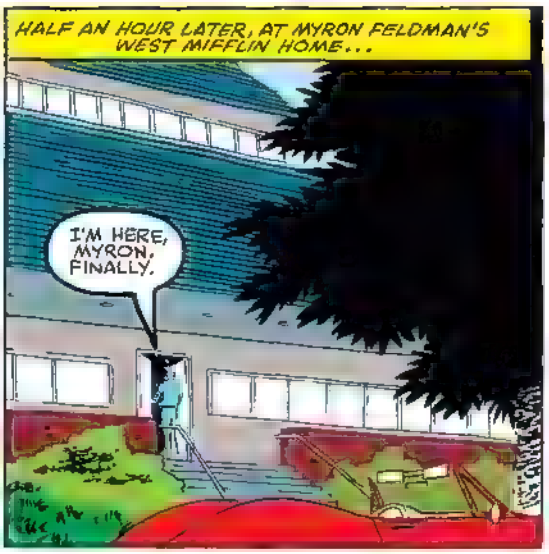

YES. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
I'LL CALL YOU. SOON. TOMORROW. OKAY?
OKAY. GOOD NIGHT, LOVE.
'NIGHT.

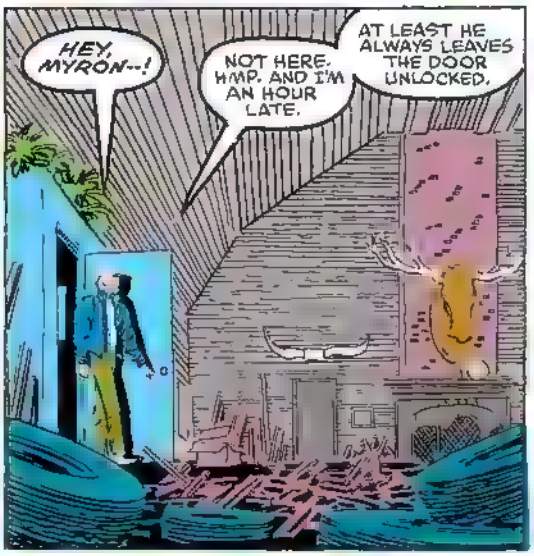

WEIRD. OH, WELL...
OH... NO...
SHE WAS STANDING ...RIGHT ...THERE...

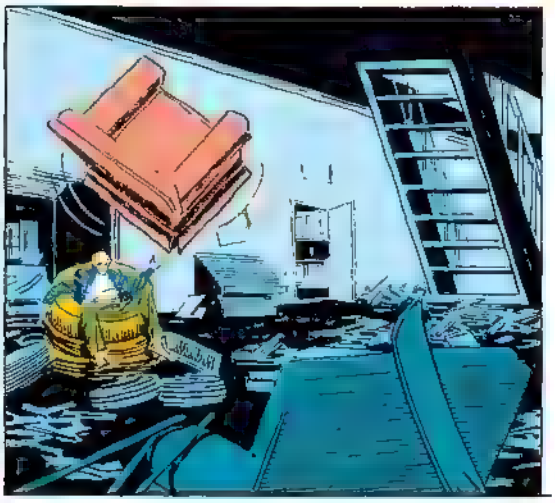
THE PICTURE!
OH... NO.

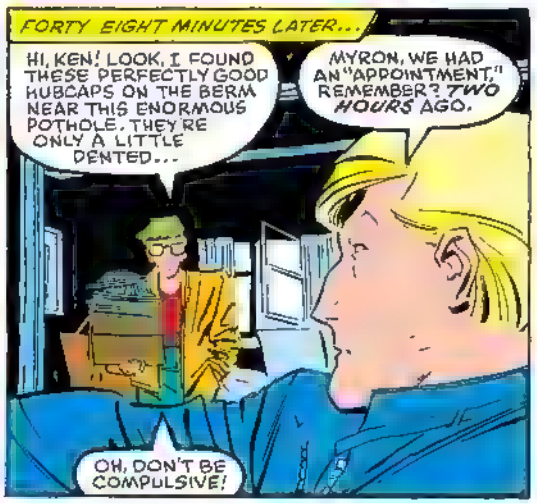



WHAT IS SOMEBODY LIKE ME... DOING WITH THIS THING?
OLD MAN... YOU REALLY PICKED A WINNER...

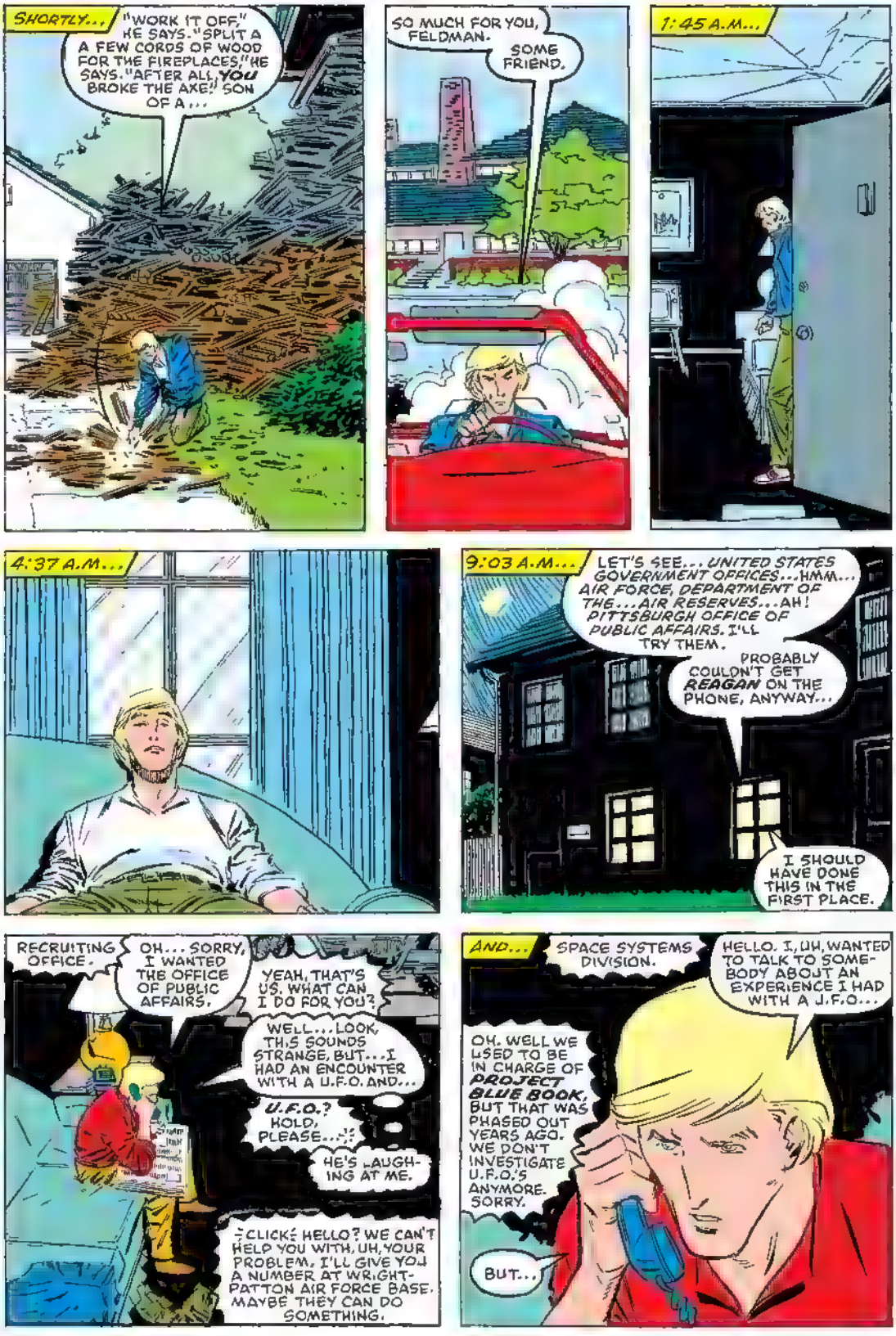

HALF AN HOUR LATER, AT MYRON FELDMAN'S WEST MIFFLIN HOME...
I'M HERE, MYRON, FINALLY.

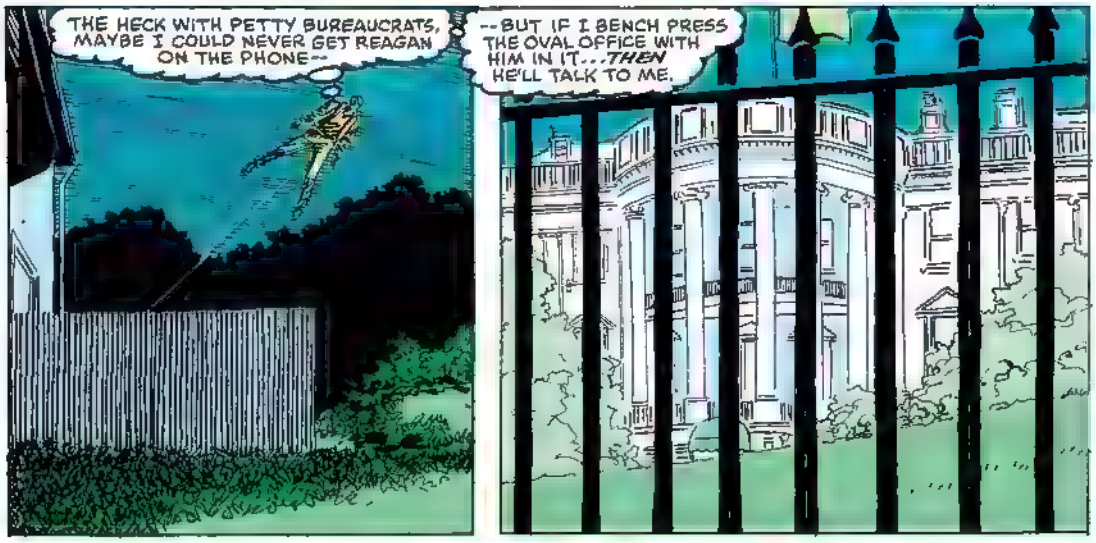

HEY, MYRON--!
NOT HERE. HMP. AND I'M AN HOUR LATE.
AT LEAST HE ALWAYS LEAVES THE DOOR UNLOCKED.

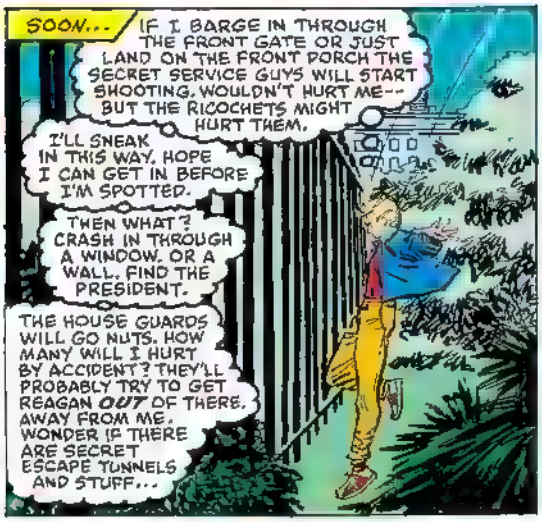



FORTY EIGHT MINUTES LATER...
HI, KEN! LOOK, I FOUND THESE PERFECTLY GOOD HUBCAPS ON THE BERM NEAR THIS ENORMOUS POTHOLE. THEY'RE ONLY A LITTLE DENTED...
MYRON, WE HAD AN "APPOINTMENT," REMEMBER? TWO HOURS AGO.
OH, DON'T BE COMPULSIVE!

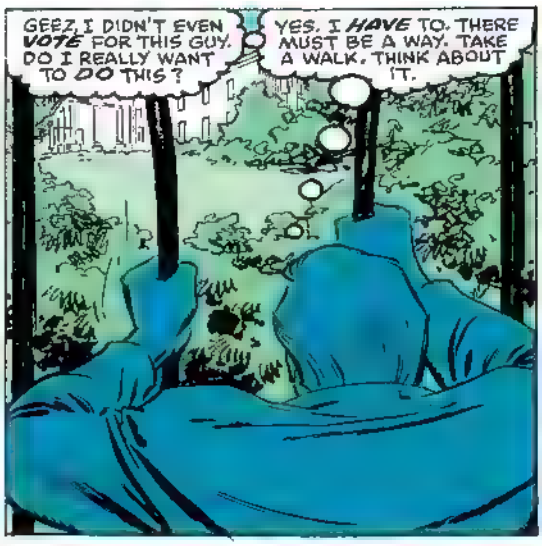
HOW COME NOBODY EVER ROBS A DINER RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME SO I CAN DO SOMETHING *USEFUL* WITH THIS POWER?
HUH?
NEVER MIND.
OKAY. I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT YOUR STORY...
SEE, THE FIRST ALIEN--THE OLD MAN--AND THE SECOND ALIEN WERE THE SAME GUY! THE WHOLE "SECOND ALIEN" THING WAS A *FAKE*--A *TEST* TO SEE IF I COULD HANDLE THE POWER. MAKES SENSE, HUH?
ME, TOO. I FIGURED IT ALL OUT WHILE I WAS WAITING.
ACTUALLY, I CAN'T BELIEVE *ANY* OF IT, KEN... ALIENS... SPACE SAUCERS... RAY GUNS...! SORRY.
WHAT? BUT MYRON...
LOOK. WE'RE REASONABLY CERTAIN THAT SOMEONE, SOMEHOW HYPNOTIZED YOU. THEREFORE WE CAN'T TRUST WHAT YOU THINK YOU REMEMBER
WAIT A MINUTE, MYRON. YOU *SAW* THE SECOND ALIEN. *BARB* SAW ONE OF HIS GUNS.
NO, I SAW AN EXPLOSION SHATTER MY PATIO DOORS... AND SOME BRIGHT FLASHES OF LIGHT. THAT'S ALL. AND BARB SAID SHE SAW A *TOY* GUN. REMEMBER?
NO ONE EXCEPT YOU HAS SEEN ANY CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF EXTRATERRESTRIALS. AND YOU CAN'T *PRODUCE* ANY, CAN YOU?
WELL...THE OLD MAN'S BODY VANISHED, AND I COULDN'T FIND A TRACE OF THE OTHER GUY... BUT WHAT ABOUT THE STAR BRAND ITSELF?
REAL, OBVIOUSLY. WHERE IT COMES FROM, HOWEVER, IS OPEN TO QUESTION. RIGHT HERE ON EARTH, I SUSPECT.
IT BOILS DOWN TO THIS--*SOMETHING* HAPPENED TO YOU... AND NOW YOU CAN DO AMAZING THINGS. THAT'S ALL WE'RE SURE OF.
BUT WHY? AND, WHY ME?
HOWEVER I GOT THIS THING, WHATEVER IT IS, I--I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'M LIVING UP TO IT. NOT... WORTHY. NOT SMART ENOUGH. NOT... GOOD...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
WHAT SHOULD *ANY* OF US DO WITH THE "POWERS" WE HAVE? LET'S TALK ABOUT THAT NEXT TIME.
YOU KNOW... I JUST REMEMBERED, I *DO* HAVE SOME CONCRETE EVIDENCE. THE OLD MAN--OR SOMEBODY--LEFT ME AN OUTFIT THAT LOOKS LIKE IT'S MADE OF CLOTH BUT IS TOUGHER THAN *ANYTHING ON EARTH.*
HMM. WELL, LET'S HAVE A LOOK. BRING IT TO OUR NEXT SESSION. CALL ME TOMORROW AND WE'LL MAKE ANOTHER APPOINTMENT.
UH, THAT'LL BE FIFTY DOLLARS FOR THIS SESSION
YOU WANT... *PAID?*
CERTAINLY. I DO THIS FOR A LIVING. I THINK WE'VE GONE BEYOND FRIENDLY CONVERSATION ABOUT THIS. THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU WE SHOULD MAKE "AN APPOINTMENT." I THOUGHT YOU UNDERSTOOD.
I DON'T *HAVE* FIFTY DOLLARS!

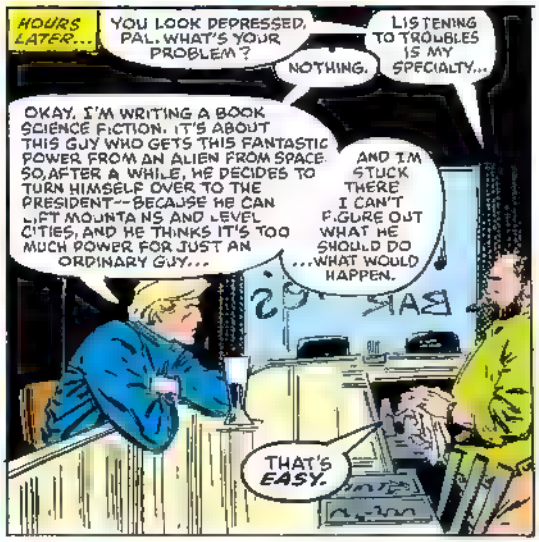

SHORTLY...
"WORK IT OFF," HE SAYS. "SPLIT A FEW CORDS OF WOOD FOR THE FIREPLACES," HE SAYS. "AFTER ALL, YOU BROKE THE AXE!" SON OF A...
SO MUCH FOR YOU, FELDMAN.
SOME FRIEND.
1:45 A.M...
4:37 A.M...
9:03 A.M...
LET'S SEE... UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OFFICES... HMM... AIR FORCE, DEPARTMENT OF THE... AIR RESERVES... AH! PITTSBURGH OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS. I'LL TRY THEM.
PROBABLY COULDN'T GET REAGAN ON THE PHONE, ANYWAY...
I SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
RECRUITING OFFICE.
OH... SORRY, I WANTED THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.
YEAH, THAT'S US. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
WELL... LOOK, THIS SOUNDS STRANGE, BUT... I HAD AN ENCOUNTER WITH A U.F.O. AND...
U.F.O.? HOLD, PLEASE...
HE'S LAUGHING AT ME.
CLICK HELLO? WE CAN'T HELP YOU WITH, UH, YOUR PROBLEM, I'LL GIVE YOU A NUMBER AT WRIGHT-PATTON AIR FORCE BASE. MAYBE THEY CAN DO SOMETHING.
AND...
SPACE SYSTEMS DIVISION.
HELLO. I, UH, WANTED TO TALK TO SOMEBODY ABOUT AN EXPERIENCE I HAD WITH A U.F.O...
OH. WELL WE USED TO BE IN CHARGE OF PROJECT BLUE BOOK, BUT THAT WAS PHASED OUT YEARS AGO. WE DON'T INVESTIGATE U.F.O.'S ANYMORE. SORRY.
BUT...

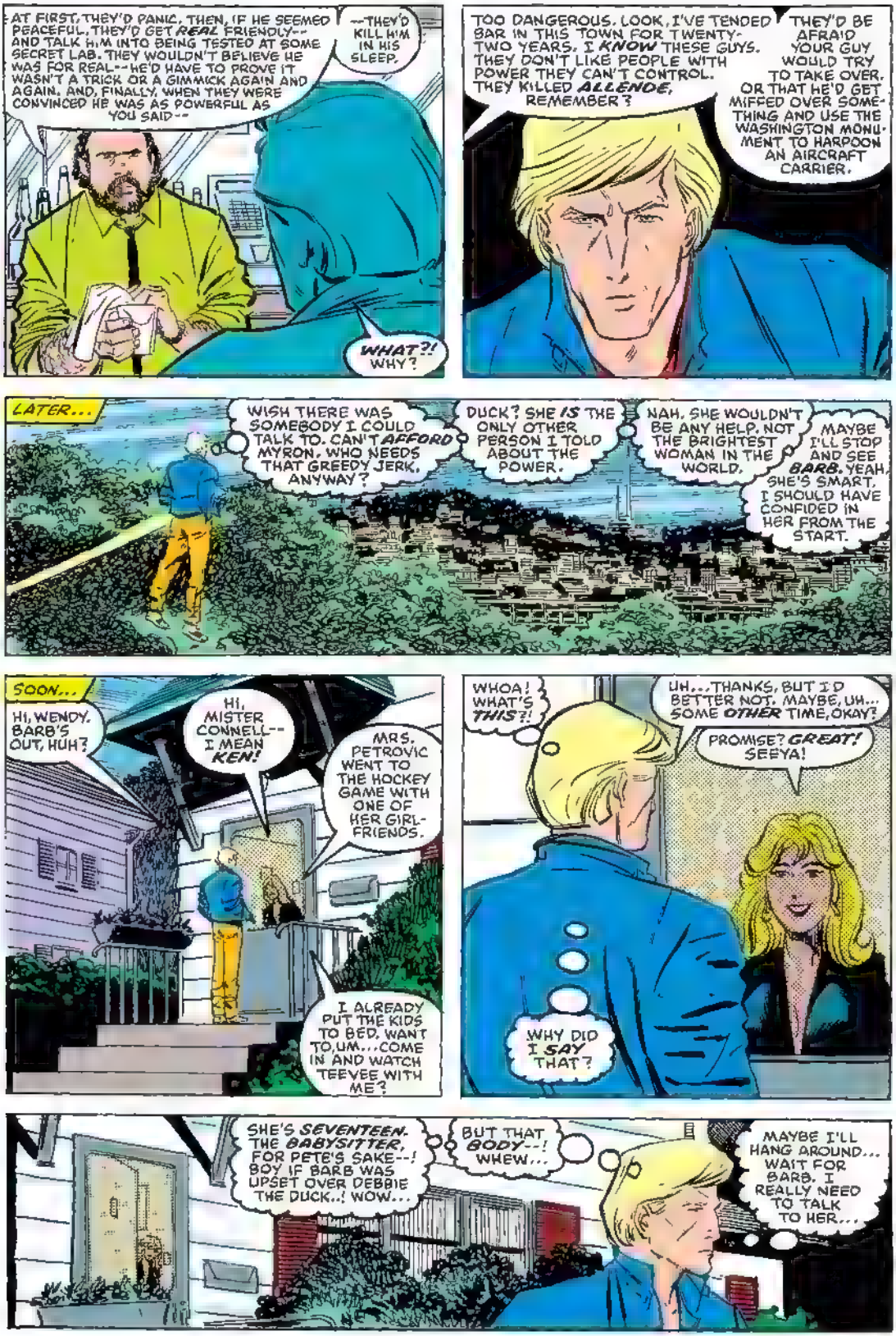

THE HECK WITH PETTY BUREAUCRATS, MAYBE I COULD NEVER GET REAGAN ON THE PHONE--
--BUT IF I BENCH PRESS THE OVAL OFFICE WITH HIM IN IT...THEN HE'LL TALK TO ME.

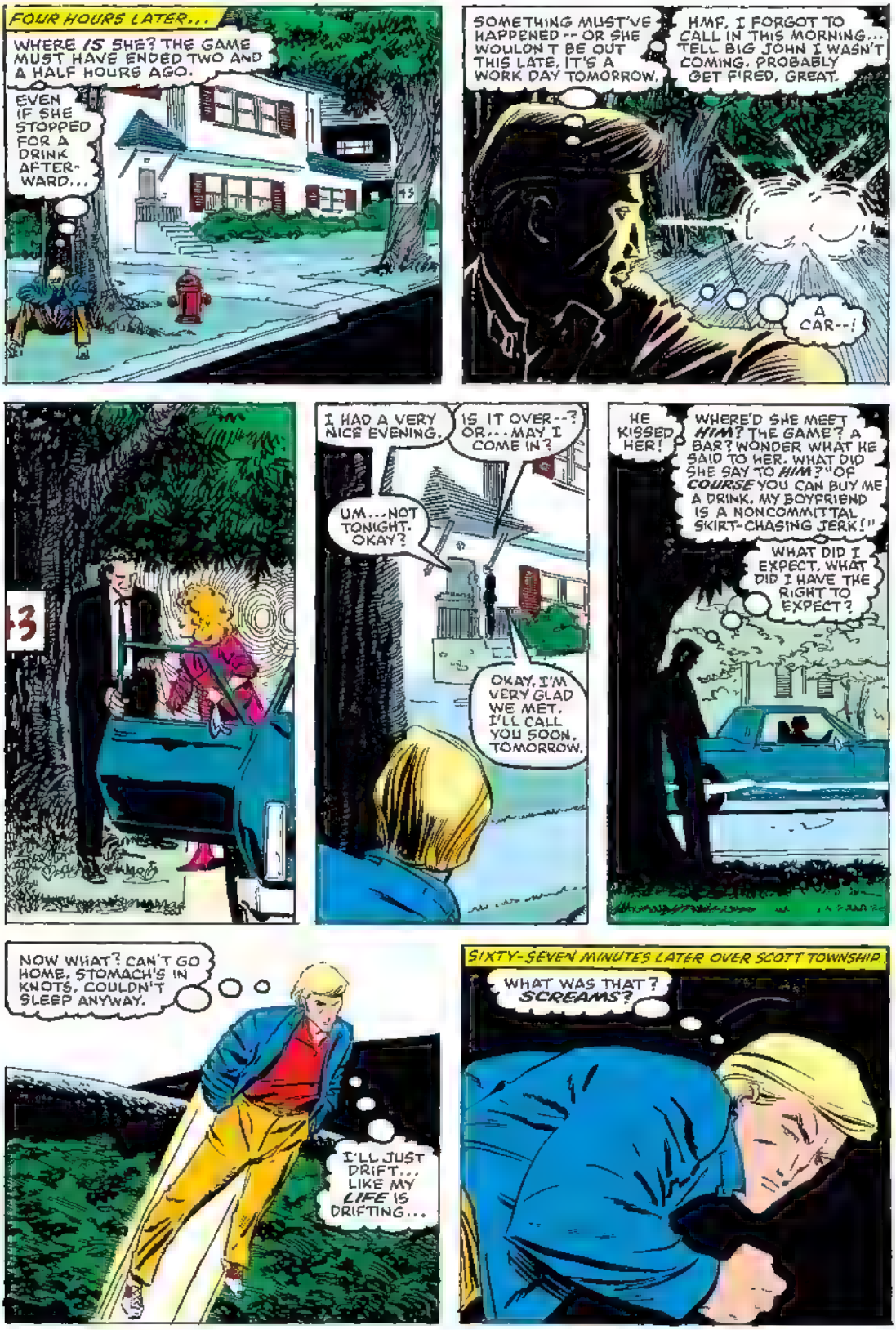

SOON...
IF I BARGE IN THROUGH THE FRONT GATE OR JUST LAND ON THE FRONT PORCH THE SECRET SERVICE GUYS WILL START SHOOTING. WOULDN'T HURT ME-- BUT THE RICOCHETS MIGHT HURT THEM.
I'LL SNEAK IN THIS WAY. HOPE I CAN GET IN BEFORE I'M SPOTTED.
THEN WHAT? CRASH IN THROUGH A WINDOW. OR A WALL. FIND THE PRESIDENT.
THE HOUSE GUARDS WILL GO NUTS. HOW MANY WILL I HURT BY ACCIDENT? THEY'LL PROBABLY TRY TO GET REAGAN OUT OF THERE. AWAY FROM ME. WONDER IF THERE ARE SECRET ESCAPE TUNNELS AND STUFF...

KUH. HE MIGHT NOT EVEN BE THERE.
THINGS ALWAYS SEEM SO EASY WHEN YOU FIRST THINK OF THEM--BUT WHEN IT GETS DOWN TO DOING IT...

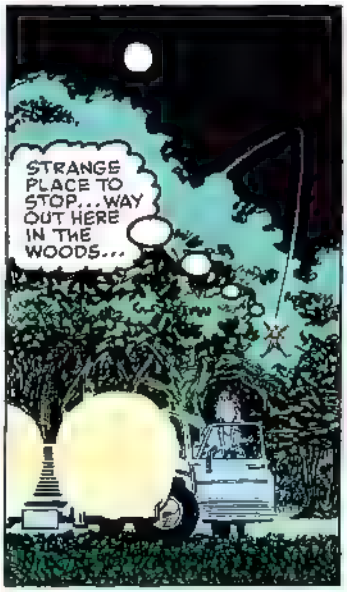

GEEZ, I DIDN'T EVEN VOTE FOR THIS GUY. DO I REALLY WANT TO DO THIS?
YES. I HAVE TO. THERE MUST BE A WAY. TAKE A WALK. THINK ABOUT IT.

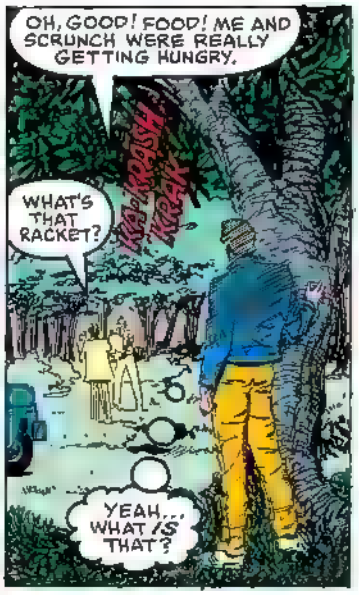

HOURS LATER...
YOU LOOK DEPRESSED, PAL. WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?
NOTHING.
LISTENING TO TROUBLES IS MY SPECIALTY...
OKAY. I'M WRITING A BOOK. SCIENCE FICTION. IT'S ABOUT THIS GUY WHO GETS THIS FANTASTIC POWER FROM AN ALIEN FROM SPACE. SO, AFTER A WHILE, HE DECIDES TO TURN HIMSELF OVER TO THE PRESIDENT--BECAUSE HE CAN LIFT MOUNTAINS AND LEVEL CITIES, AND HE THINKS IT'S TOO MUCH POWER FOR JUST AN ORDINARY GUY...
AND I'M STUCK THERE. I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT HE SHOULD DO ...WHAT WOULD HAPPEN.
THAT'S EASY.


AT FIRST, THEY'D PANIC. THEN, IF HE SEEMED PEACEFUL, THEY'D GET REAL FRIENDLY--AND TALK HIM INTO BEING TESTED AT SOME SECRET LAB. THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE HE WAS FOR REAL--HE'D HAVE TO PROVE IT WASN'T A TRICK OR A GIMMICK AGAIN AND AGAIN. AND, FINALLY, WHEN THEY WERE CONVINCED HE WAS AS POWERFUL AS YOU SAID--
--THEY'D KILL HIM IN HIS SLEEP.
WHAT?! WHY?
TOO DANGEROUS. LOOK, I'VE TENDED BAR IN THIS TOWN FOR TWENTY-TWO YEARS. I KNOW THESE GUYS. THEY DON'T LIKE PEOPLE WITH POWER THEY CAN'T CONTROL. THEY KILLED ALLENDE, REMEMBER?
THEY'D BE AFRAID YOUR GUY WOULD TRY TO TAKE OVER. OR THAT HE'D GET MIFFED OVER SOMETHING AND USE THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT TO HARPOON AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER.
LATER...
WISH THERE WAS SOMEBODY I COULD TALK TO. CAN'T AFFORD MYRON, WHO NEEDS THAT GREEDY JERK, ANYWAY?
DUCK? SHE IS THE ONLY OTHER PERSON I TOLD ABOUT THE POWER.
NAH. SHE WOULDN'T BE ANY HELP. NOT THE BRIGHTEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD.
MAYBE I'LL STOP AND SEE BARB. YEAH. SHE'S SMART. I SHOULD HAVE CONFIDED IN HER FROM THE START.
SOON...
HI, WENDY. BARB'S OUT, HUH?
HI, MISTER CONNELL--I MEAN KEN!
MRS. PETROVIC WENT TO THE HOCKEY GAME WITH ONE OF HER GIRL-FRIENDS.
I ALREADY PUT THE KIDS TO BED. WANT TO, UM... COME IN AND WATCH TEEVEE WITH ME?
WHOA! WHAT'S THIS?!
UH... THANKS, BUT I'D BETTER NOT. MAYBE, UH... SOME OTHER TIME, OKAY?
PROMISE? GREAT! SEEYA!
WHY DID I SAY THAT?
SHE'S SEVENTEEN. THE BABYSITTER, FOR PETE'S SAKE--! BOY IF BARB WAS UPSET OVER DEBBIE THE DUCK..! WOW...
BUT THAT BODY--! WHEW...
MAYBE I'LL HANG AROUND... WAIT FOR BARB. I REALLY NEED TO TALK TO HER...


FOUR HOURS LATER...
WHERE IS SHE? THE GAME MUST HAVE ENDED TWO AND A HALF HOURS AGO.
EVEN IF SHE STOPPED FOR A DRINK AFTER-WARD...
43
SOMETHING MUST'VE HAPPENED -- OR SHE WOULDN'T BE OUT THIS LATE, IT'S A WORK DAY TOMORROW.
HMF. I FORGOT TO CALL IN THIS MORNING... TELL BIG JOHN I WASN'T COMING. PROBABLY GET FIRED, GREAT.
A CAR--!
43
I HAD A VERY NICE EVENING.
IS IT OVER--? OR... MAY I COME IN?
UM...NOT TONIGHT. OKAY?
OKAY. I'M VERY GLAD WE MET. I'LL CALL YOU SOON, TOMORROW.
HE KISSED HER!
WHERE'D SHE MEET HIM? THE GAME? A BAR? WONDER WHAT HE SAID TO HER. WHAT DID SHE SAY TO HIM?"OF COURSE YOU CAN BUY ME A DRINK. MY BOYFRIEND IS A NONCOMMITTAL SKIRT-CHASING JERK!"
WHAT DID I EXPECT, WHAT DID I HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT?
NOW WHAT? CAN'T GO HOME. STOMACH'S IN KNOTS. COULDN'T SLEEP ANYWAY.
I'LL JUST DRIFT... LIKE MY LIFE IS DRIFTING...
SIXTY-SEVEN MINUTES LATER OVER SCOTT TOWNSHIP.
WHAT WAS THAT? SCREAMS?

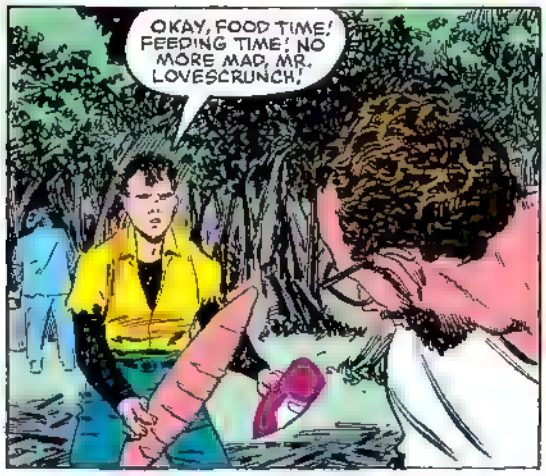
AN ALL-NIGHT SUPERMARKET. WHAT IS IT--? FIRE?
NOBODY'S LOOKING. TOO DARK FOR ANYBODY TO SEE ME ANYWAY...
HEY! LADY! WAIT A MINUTE!
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY IS EVERYBODY RUNNING?
I--I DON'T KNOW. I'M JUST SCARED. LET ME GO!
WEIRD.
HMM. SHE LOOKS PRETTY CALM.
EXIT
3
HOLEE--! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
I...GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE! GOT TO RUN--!
NO!
NO. THAT'S CRAZY. THERE'S NO REASON--! NOTHING TO RUN AWAY FROM.
JUST A TIRED-LOOKING WOMAN.
THAT WAS... BIZARRE. WHAT WAS I SO AFRAID OF ALL OF THE SUDDEN?
IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN HER. SHE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A GUN OR ANYTHING. STILL...
MAYBE I'LL JUST FOLLOW HER...

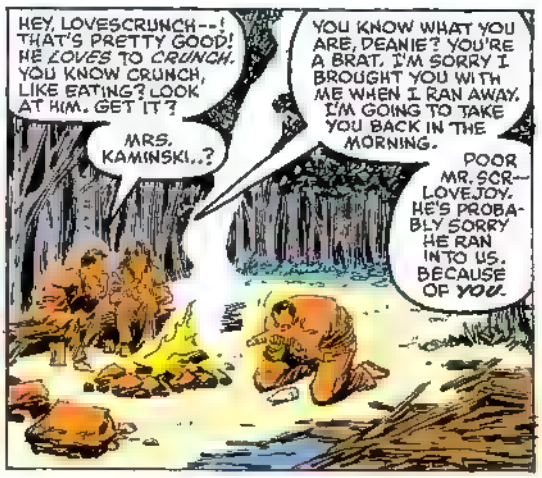

STRANGE PLACE TO STOP... WAY OUT HERE IN THE WOODS...

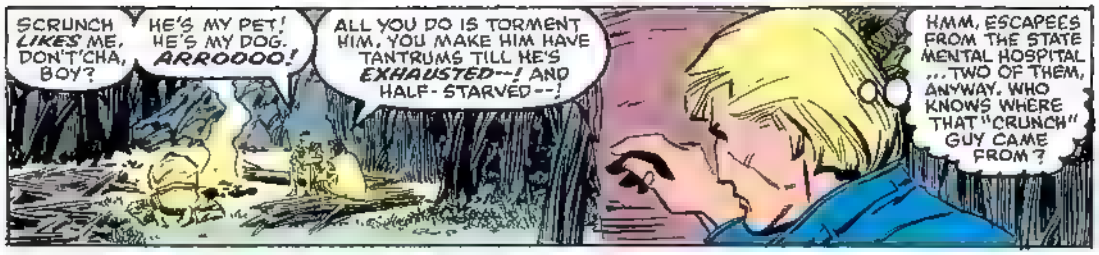

OH, GOOD! FOOD! ME AND SCRUNCH WERE REALLY GETTING HUNGRY.
KRASH
KRASH
WHAT'S THAT RACKET?
YEAH... WHAT *IS* THAT?

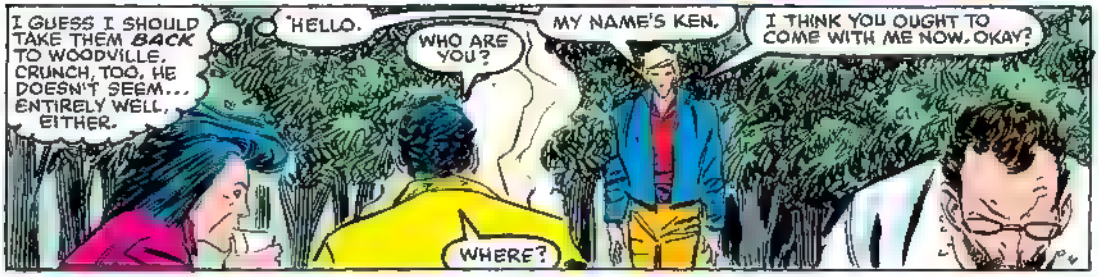
HAVE YOU BEEN TORMENTING POOR MR. LOVEJOY, AGAIN? WHY WON'T YOU BEHAVE?
I BEHAVE! OLD SCRUNCH JUST GETS MAD, YOU KNOW?
YOU *MAKE* HIM MAD. AND DON'T CALL HIM THAT.

NOW, YOU STOP MAKING HIM MAD OR *YOU'RE* GOING BACK TO WOODVILLE, YOUNG MAN.
AW-W!
RRRAA-A-AHH!
KRASH!

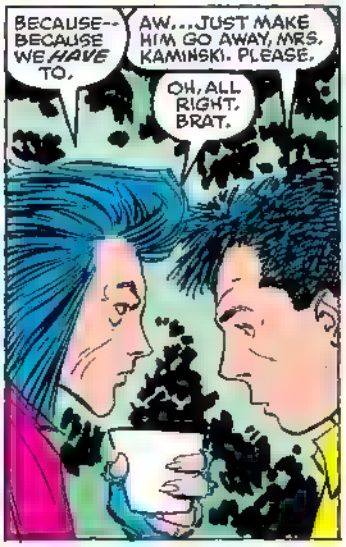

OKAY, FOOD TIME! FEEDING TIME! NO MORE MAD, MR. LOVESCRUNCH!

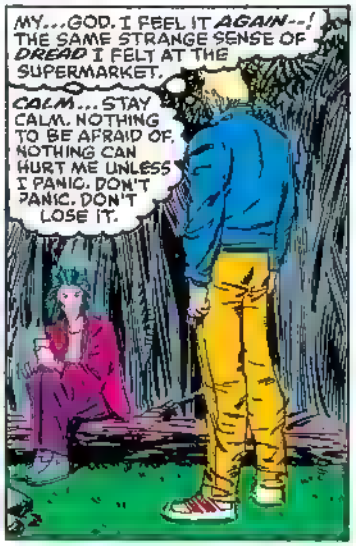

HEY, LOVESCRUNCH--! THAT'S PRETTY GOOD! HE *LOVES* TO *CRUNCH*. YOU KNOW CRUNCH, LIKE EATING? LOOK AT HIM. GET IT?
MRS. KAMINSKI..?
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE, DEANIE? YOU'RE A BRAT. I'M SORRY I BROUGHT YOU WITH ME WHEN I RAN AWAY. I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU BACK IN THE MORNING.
POOR MR. SCR--LOVEJOY. HE'S PROBABLY SORRY HE RAN INTO US. BECAUSE OF *YOU*.


SCRUNCH LIKES ME, DON'T'CHA, BOY?
HE'S MY PET! HE'S MY DOG. ARROOOO!
ALL YOU DO IS TORMENT HIM, YOU MAKE HIM HAVE TANTRUMS TILL HE'S EXHAUSTED--! AND HALF-STARVED--!
HMM, ESCAPEES FROM THE STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL ... TWO OF THEM, ANYWAY. WHO KNOWS WHERE THAT "CRUNCH" GUY CAME FROM?

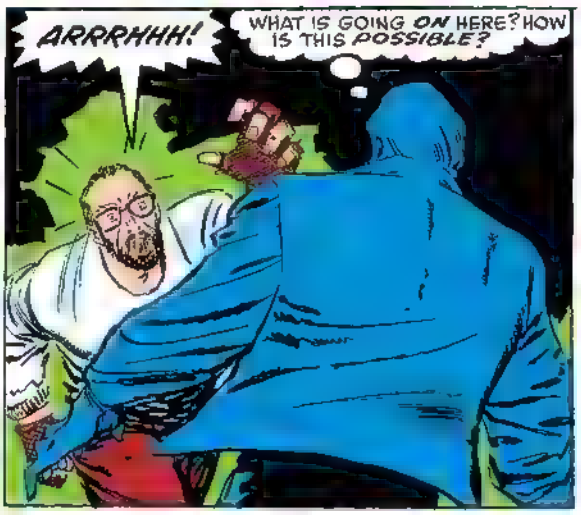

I GUESS I SHOULD TAKE THEM BACK TO WOODVILLE. CRUNCH, TOO. HE DOESN'T SEEM... ENTIRELY WELL, EITHER.
HELLO.
WHO ARE YOU?
MY NAME'S KEN.
I THINK YOU OUGHT TO COME WITH ME NOW, OKAY?
WHERE?

TO SEE SOME PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOU.
WOODVILLE. RATS.
ALL RIGHT.
I DON'T WANT TO GO.
WELL, YOU HAVE TO.
WHY?


BECAUSE-- BECAUSE WE HAVE TO.
AW... JUST MAKE HIM GO AWAY, MRS. KAMINSKI. PLEASE.
OH, ALL RIGHT, BRAT.

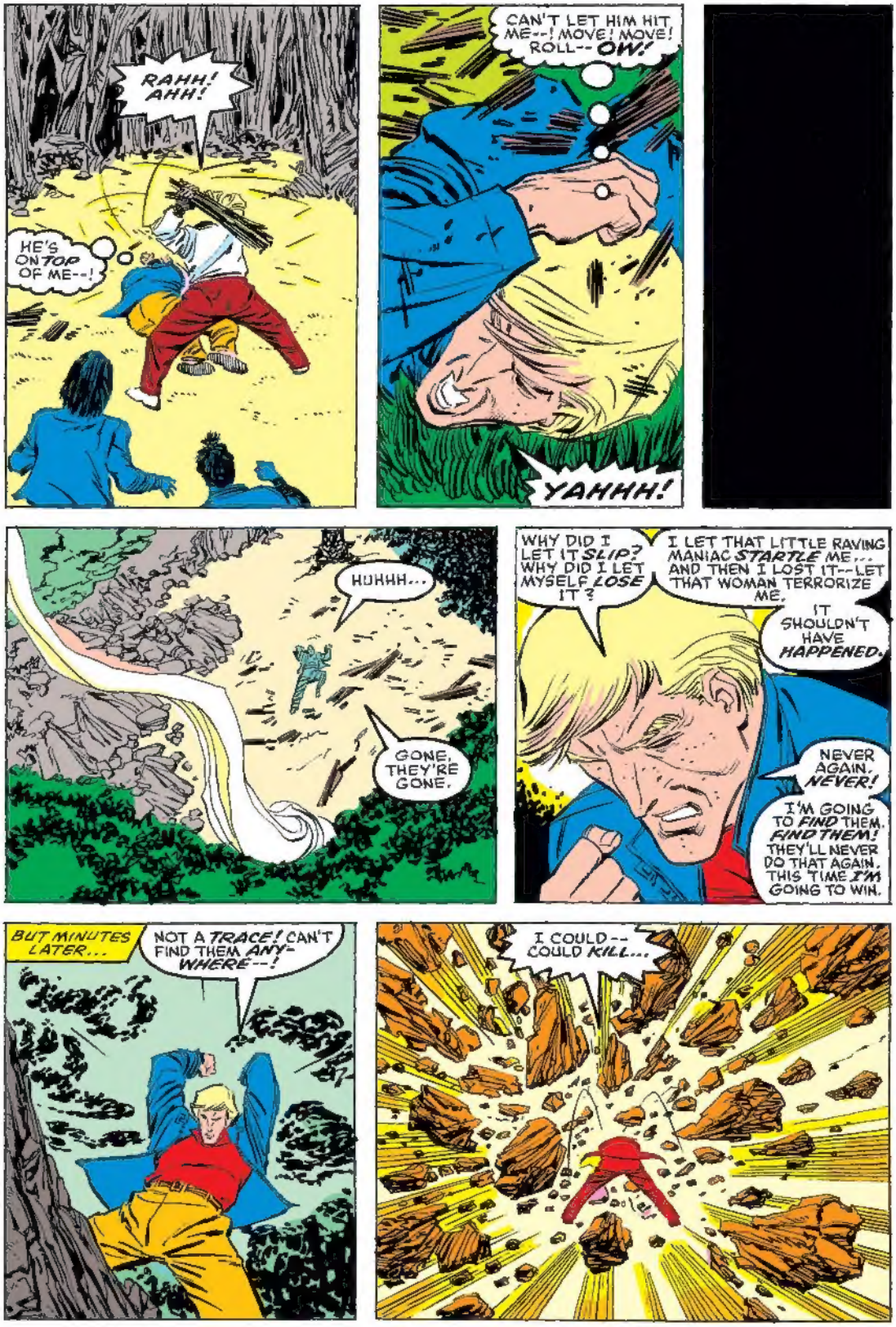

MY... GOD. I FEEL IT AGAIN--! THE SAME STRANGE SENSE OF DREAD I FELT AT THE SUPERMARKET.
CALM... STAY CALM. NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF. NOTHING CAN HURT ME UNLESS I PANIC. DON'T PANIC. DON'T LOSE IT.

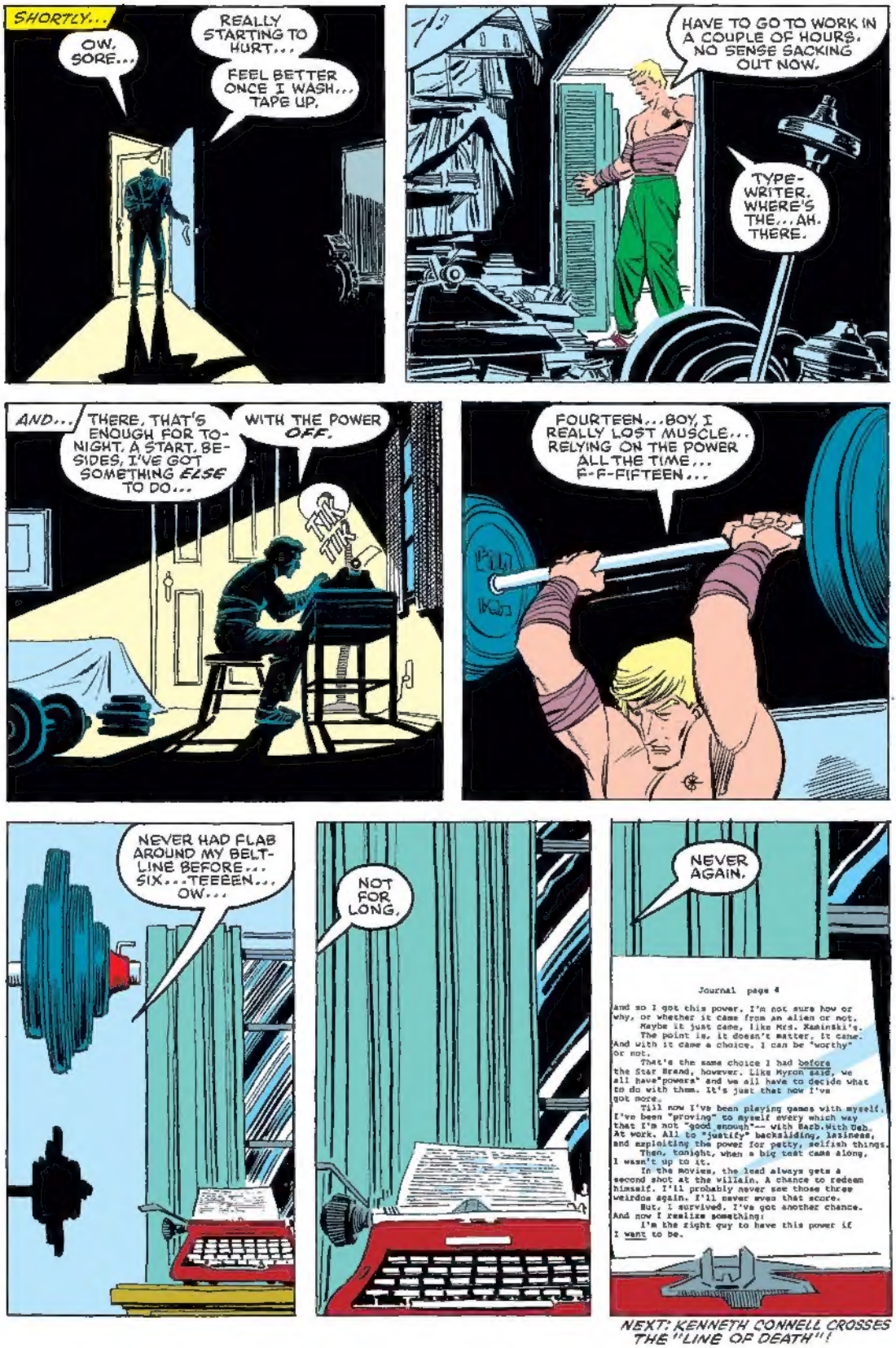
WHEW! I'M UNDER CONTROL, BUT I CAN STILL FEEL... SHEER TERROR GNAWING AT ME.
IS... SHE DOING THIS? NO, I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT. HOW?
WELL?
I'M TRYING.
I CAN DO IT. WATCH.
HUHNN!


ARRRHHH!
WHAT IS GOING ON HERE? HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

FUFFF!
AMAZING! HE'S A LOT STRONGER THAN A GUY HIS SIZE--OR EVEN MY SIZE--SHOULD BE.
SHE MAKES PEOPLE AFRAID... THE KID GIVES THEM FITS OF RAGE...AND THIS LITTLE GUY IS A REGULAR MIGHTY MOUSE!
THERE MUST BE A RATIONAL EXPLANATION.
HA! SURE. JUST LIKE THERE IS FOR WHAT I CAN DO...
SHE'S STILL AT IT. STILL CLAWING AT MY SELF-CONTROL.
HOW DO YOU DO THAT?
I DON'T KNOW.
DID--DID SOMEONE... GIVE YOU THIS POWER--THIS THING YOU DO? WAS IT AN OLD MAN?
NO. IT JUST CAME, A WHILE AGO.
YOU'RE A HARD ONE!
YES. SO LET'S JUST ALL GET IN THE CAR, NOW, OKAY.
NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, YOU WON'T BUDGE--! THAT'S VERY UNUSUAL.
SCRUNCH. BOY, YOU'RE LETTING ME DOWN!
I'M GIVING YOU ALL... I... CAN--!
NOW, GET BACK OVER THERE--!

LOOK, LADY, I'M WARNING YOU. CUT IT OUT, ALREADY.
YOU AREN'T GOING TO HIT ME, ARE YOU?
NO, BUT...
AHH! AHH! AHHH!
AAAHH!
HEY--!
RAAHHH!
JEEZ--!
HE'S TRYING TO KILL ME--! HE'S GOING TO KILL ME!
GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! TAKE OFF!
OH, NO! THE POWER'S FADING--! I CAN'T FLY--!
NOT NOW!
ARRH!
NO! GOT TO GET IT BACK CALM DOWN CATCH MY BREATH JUST NEED A SECOND COME ON--!
JUST A SECOND T-TO GET BACK T-TOGETHER.


RAHH! AHH!
HE'S ON TOP OF ME--!
CAN'T LET HIM HIT ME--! MOVE! MOVE! ROLL-- OW!
YAHHH!
HUHHH...
GONE. THEY'RE GONE.
WHY DID I LET IT SLIP? WHY DID I LET MYSELF LOSE IT?
I LET THAT LITTLE RAVING MANIAC STARTLE ME... AND THEN I LOST IT--LET THAT WOMAN TERRORIZE ME.
IT SHOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED.
NEVER AGAIN. NEVER!
I'M GOING TO FIND THEM. FIND THEM! THEY'LL NEVER DO THAT AGAIN. THIS TIME I'M GOING TO WIN.
BUT MINUTES LATER...
NOT A TRACE! CAN'T FIND THEM ANY-WHERE--!
I COULD-- COULD KILL...


SHORTLY...
OW, SORE...
REALLY STARTING TO HURT...
FEEL BETTER ONCE I WASH... TAPE UP.
HAVE TO GO TO WORK IN A COUPLE OF HOURS. NO SENSE SACKING OUT NOW.
TYPE-WRITER. WHERE'S THE... AH. THERE.
AND...
THERE, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TO-NIGHT. A START. BE-SIDES, I'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE TO DO...
WITH THE POWER OFF.
TAK TAK
FOURTEEN... BOY, I REALLY LOST MUSCLE... RELYING ON THE POWER ALL THE TIME... F-F-FIFTEEN...
NEVER HAD FLAB AROUND MY BELT-LINE BEFORE... SIX... TEEEEN... OW...
NOT FOR LONG.
NEVER AGAIN.
Journal page 4
And so I got this power. I'm not sure how or why, or whether it came from an alien or not. Maybe it just came, like Mrs. Kasinski's.
The point is, it doesn't matter, it came. And with it came a choice. I can be "worthy" or not.
That's the same choice I had before the Star Brand, however. Like Myron said, we all have "powers" and we all have to decide what to do with them. It's just that now I've got more.
Till now I've been playing games with myself. I've been "proving" to myself every which way that I'm not "good enough"-- with Barb. With Deb. At work. All to "justify" backsliding, laziness, and exploiting the power for petty, selfish things.
Then, tonight, when a big test came along, I wasn't up to it.
In the movies, the lead always gets a second shot at the villain. A chance to redeem himself. I'll probably never see those three weirdos again. I'll never even that score.
But, I survived. I've got another chance. And now I realize something:
I'm the right guy to have this power if I want to be.

NEXT: KENNETH CONNELL CROSSES THE "LINE OF DEATH"!